YOUNG GUNS

NOVEMBER 23, 1987

Director: Christopher Cain
Producer: Joe Roth

YOUNG GUNS

AN ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

BY

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THE HISTORICAL EVENTS REPRESENTED IN THIS FILM ARE TRUE, AND OCCURRED IN SOUTHEASTERN NEW MEXICO BETWEEN FEBRUARY AND AUGUST, 1878.

EXT. PARADISE STREET - WHITE OAKS, NEW MEXICO - DAY

Sodom and Gomorrah--under the guise of a silver town. Not a silver town of legend and lies, but the real thing: a crammed plaza of lopsided rye mills and smith shops and gunstores. A tent pitched here and there to serve as an attorney's office or den of iniquity.

The street is manufactured of mud and mule dung--a quagmire which slows the TRAFFIC of buckboards, PEOPLE and DOGS. And there is a strange sense of tension hanging in the air; STRANGE MUSIC. BEGIN TITLES.

WE MOVE SLOWLY, hauntingly, up the street, passing a CHINESE MAN carrying buckets of soap powder.

A FAT WOMAN ala Calamity Jane Canary stands on a corner, disgustingly drunk and aggressive. And there are MEXICANS, MUDHEELS, and WELL-DRESSED LADIES packing the walks. A GERMAN IMMIGRANT in *liederhosen* hurries by and he looks lost. Very lost.

REVERSE ANGLE - A CARRIAGE

creaking along the street behind two fine horses. The driver, pronouncedly British in imported tweeds and bulldog pipe, is JOHN HENRY TUNSTALL, forty.

Sitting beside him is JOSIAH "DOC" SCURLOCK, a twenty year-old kid who has both a scruffy miscreant look and a touch of faro dealer's style: long black duster, fingerless ranch gloves and bowler derby. He keeps a fifty-caliber Sharp's buffalo rifle at his side.

Tunstall guides the carriage PAST A REAL ESTATE SNAKE who does his pitch from a parked buckboard.

REAL ESTATE MAN
The trains is comin' in full and the land of milk and honey's goin' fast, folks; goin' fast. Coal, copper, more silver than Colorada. Get your land while you can . . .

They continue on PAST THE MAN, PAST SOME MINERS on the corner. PAST A PRETTY EASTERN GIRL walking with her PARENTS. Doc gives her a smile, tips his derby and turns around in the buckboard to check her out. Tunstall is looking in the opposite direction, at a BUZZARD HEAD standing beside a sign and a SCRAWNY DOG.

TUNSTALL
(British Victorian)
That fellow's selling that dog for five dollars. What does it do? Give massages?

DOC
(still scoping butt)
They eat dog in White Oaks, John. This is an upscale type a town, didn't you know that?

Tunstall looks back at the dog vender with startled disgust and does not see--

A BUCKBOARD

pulling out in front of them--a near collision. A PACK OF MINERS, filthy sods crammed into the wagon, turn foul looks on the Tunstall carriage.

Tunstall gets his horses under control while one of the miners CUSSES him out.

TUNSTALL
I do beg of your pardon, Chaps. Didn't see you coming.

MINER
(a true dog-eater)
Goddamn Englishman--ought'a shoot your dandy ass.

And a second miner unplugs a half-eaten orange from his lips and hurls it at Tunstall, striking him in the side of the face. The miners ride on, but--

Doc makes a move for his buffalo rifle. Tunstall quickly lays a hand against his arm and stops him.

TUNSTALL
Milk and honey, young man. Milk and honey.

Doc remains tense for a long moment . . . then relaxes. The young man speaks with a distinct Missouri-bred voice, his language suggesting a diamond in the rough.

DOC
Sorry, John. Just wanted to reciprocate the man's favor.

TUNSTALL
(pleasantly surprised)
That's a lovely word, that. Reciprocate.

Doc replaces the Sharps rifle with a thick leatherbound book, and shows Tunstall where the bookmark is.

DOC
More than three-quarters of the way through *David Copperfield.*

Doc grins big and proud. Tunstall looks pleased.

TUNSTALL
Well, then, that calls for skipping lunch and going straight to the saloon for a jolly big glass of--

BOOOOM! A SHOTGUN BLAST

explodes and triggers a rush of CHAOS on the other side of the street; SCREAMING. FOOTSTEPS pounding the wood walkway. MEN SHOUTING. Doc drops the book and turns.

POV:

across the street a young kid is running: an ungainly, mud-caked young man of twenty-one or so, running through people, tripping, falling, springing back up and running again.

Behind him, a CROWD of nasty-looking men--ten or twelve mudheel types--pursue him, guns drawn, SHOUTING at him.

REVERSE - TUNSTALL

and Doc observe the chase.

TUNSTALL
(impatiently)
Oh, not another hanging.

ON THE WOODEN WALKWAY

the running kid, HENRY McCARTY, also known as WILLIAM H. BONNEY, clutches a Colt revolver in his right hand and races as fast as his tattered boots can take him.

He is a strange sight: a slight youth with a pale, pinched face, small rodent-like eyes and bucked teeth. He wears a crushed hat, dirty canvas jacket and pants stuffed into boots. As he runs, he seems to be smirking as if eliciting a thrill from the chase.

Now, as the men get closer, he grabs at a cart of cabbages and knocks them over, throwing an obstacle in their path. And with this coup, he LAUGHS out in an adnoidal, wise-acre manner, dives to the ground and crawls like a contortionist under a buckboard wagon that has blocked the walk. He pops out the other side and keeps running. But now SEVERAL MORE MEN come out an alley to pick up the foot chase.

MUDHEEL
(distantly)
Catch that re-tard and beat the Lucifer out of his body!

ACROSS THE STREET

Tunstall cracks his horses suddenly and guides the carriage forward. Doc holds on tightly as they thunder past other horses and wagons and people, trotting through the mud, outrunning the men who pursue this puckish derelict.

TURNING DOWN A SIDE STREET

the Englishman passes three more of the running men and moves up on Bonney.

THE KID

is running, turning occasionally to look back and YELL some adolescent OBSCENITY at his hunters. Behind him the Tunstall carriage looms, kicking up mud. Getting closer.

The boy spins his revolver, trains it on the Englishman, but something smells safe about the well-dressed gentleman racing by and he doesn't slay him.

TUNSTALL
(as he passes)
Up here, Lad. Hurry now. Don't be afraid.

Billy looks back to see a string of men turning the corner and FIRING their powder. With a run and a hop, he grabs onto the back of the carriage and falls in, training his pistol on Doc. Doc stares at the gun uncomfortably.

DOC
Hidy.

Billy rolls up to a knee and looks back at the men left behind. He snorts and spits in their direction, then cracks a wild LAUGH.

Tunstall keeps the horses moving and breaks off down a carriage road. Billy sits back, breathless . . . his laughter still simmering. As they get further into the sticks, Tunstall looks back at the kid.

TUNSTALL
You better keep down, young chap. Couldn't stomach seeing another body hanged today.
(a pause)
Pardon me--John Tunstall from Lincoln. London, actually, but currently out of Lincoln.

Billy looks at the clean, manicured hand that is being offered. He takes it, pumps it once, then looks back toward White Oaks with a dare-devilish glimmer in his blue eyes.

TUNSTALL
(continuing)
And you, my young man?

Billy leans toward the men up front. When he speaks, it is in a voice high and pinched (Bonney had his nose broken by a tequila bottle when he was eighteen and never fixed).

BILLY
(stately)
Bonney. William H.
(a beat)
And don't get any uh . . . uh . . . "suspicious" ideas about what went on back there.

As he speaks, we note that he is stealing things left and right: stuffing a bottle of Sloan's Linament in one pocket, a horseshoe in the other, a tin of shoe-black in his tattered vest. He's lifting everything but the pheasants Tunstall has in a cage.

BILLY
(continuing; explaining)
Just a friendly foot race . . . in which I was the winner.

DOC
Congratulations.

BILLY
Thank you.

Billy gets into a comfortable position, kicking back with his feet up on the pheasant cage. He begins BLOWING HIS NOSE LOUDLY into a kerchief. Doc looks over at Tunstall and arcs a brow as if to say "what a case." Tunstall smiles.

TUNSTALL
Lovely.

Undaunted, Tunstall prances into the fireball of the New Mexico sun as CREDITS END and SCORE RISES--LOS LOBOS, Mexican-American; upbeat and tough. Music leads into and through--

EXT. JOHN TUNSTALL'S RANCH/OUTSIDE LINCOLN, N.M.--LATE DAY

From the fringes of a LARGE CATTLE HERD walk FOUR FIGURES, exhausted and blackened with dirt. Young men, all under twenty-one--rough boys. If it were a hundred years down the line, they'd be on Harleys, hell-bent for leather. But horses suit them fine.

The first boy is seventeen, known simply as DIRTY STEVE, laconic, intense: like a rope swing twisted to the very branch.

Not far behind him is CHARLES BOWDRE, a wiseacre, peach-fuzzed and overweight kid who is always losing his canvas Levis down his rump. But he lets them slide now as he stumbles forward, sweat-drenched and short of breath.

Behind Charles walks DICK BREWER, a Vermont transplant, hard-bodied like a stallion. And good looking. And just a dog-step behind Dick is--

JOSE CHAVEZ Y CHAVEZ, a lean youth, half-Mexican, half-Zuni Indian. His dark chiseled features and belt of knives make him an imposing presence, even at nineteen years old. He strips off his shirt and scarf, hurrying to get to

THE WASH TUB

an old-fashioned bath out near a fence where Dirty Steve, Charley and Dick are already kneeling and splashing and rough-housing.

Levis come off. someone's white butt slips under the water. Dirty Steve hangs his shotgun on a clothes hook, begins stripping his pants off, but only gets down to his red union suit when he spots an approaching carriage. Brewer spots it, too.

BREWER
(hurried)
John's back. Wash it up and in your supper clothes, let's go.

The crude manners subside for a moment as the carriage creaks past and Doc bails out, clutching his buffalo rifle. John Tunstall tips his hat to his brood and continues on toward the main house, the new boy sitting in back with the birds.

BREWER
(continuing)
Glad you're back, Doc, you can start haulin' rope inside.

Doc is still gazing off after the carriage. And so is Charley and Dirty Steve.

DIRTY STEVE
(Southern as a cottonmouth)
John take another hard-case in?

CHARLEY
Shit, it ain't another Mexican, is it?

Chavez Chavez whips a killer look onto Charley, and Brewer instinctively steps between the two.

CHAVEZ CHAVEZ
Mexican-Indian, you sonuvabitch.

CHARLEY
That just means you need your ass kicked twice, Chavez.

Again, Chavez makes a move and, again, Brewer holds him back. With the situation temporarily under control, Brewer turns to Doc and nods toward the carriage, curious.

BREWER
Who is it?

Doc shakes his head slowly.

DOC
The finest specimen of a piece a'shit I ever seen.

MOVING ACROSS THE RANCH

Tunstall guides the carriage toward the main house. He looks back with an amused smile and finds Billy staring at the boys around the tub, suspiciously.

BILLY
Who're them?

TUNSTALL
They, William. Who are they.

POV;

a rouges' gallery of juvenile fuck-ups. Chavez Chavez has gotten to Charley, and they are shoving each other. Dirty Steve ducks behind Chavez and Charley pushes him into the tub. Chavez Chavez springs out, drawing a knife, and Brewer and Doc have to constrain him.

TUNSTALL (O.S.)
(continuing; seemingly fascinated)
"They" are boys from the dregs; the flotsam and jetsam of frontier society, if you will.

REVERSE ON TUNSTALL

guiding the carriage right, up along the font of the bunk house. He casts an amused eye onto young Bonney.

TUNSTALL
We've got room in the bunkhouse, my young man. If you don't wish to stay, the Union Pacific runs out of Mesilla Proper in the morning. If you do wish to stay, well . . .
(he parks)
--we've got just the job for you.

Billy looks at Tunstall, curious. And hungry.

CUT TO:

PLOP! A bucket of water hitting the side of an ENORMOUS PIG. William H. Bonney is down in the sty, working swine, dumping water into their dried-up mud bath. It is the next morning, the sun high and brutal.

Billy bends down to pick up another bucket, but he senses the huge hog SNORTING up on him, and he wheels clumsily, spilling the water.

BILLY

Git.

The pig keeps moving up closer to him. He picks up the empty bucket and threatens it at the pig. Taking a step back, he falls over another bucket with a CLANK.

ACROSS THE WAY

Dirty Steve and Doc are on their horses, stopping in the middle of beef work to watch the new boy.

DIRTY STEVE
(an ever so slow drawl. And this remark becomes a litany)

He ain't all there, is he?

AT THE STY

Billy coaxes the pig away from him and leans on the fence, seemingly assessing the dismal situation. At the sound of a wooden THUD, he turns and takes in the sight of--

CHAVEZ CHAVEZ

standing poised in an alley between pig barn and bunkhouse. Motionless. Like wood. And then his right arm uncoils, strikes like a snake at full-length, and releasing a throwing blade. m WHAAACK! It strikes a crudely painted human target in the head, inches from three other knives already thrown there.

CHARLEY (O.S.)

Hey.

Charley Bowdre tugs at his baggy Levis and grins from the other side of the fence. Billy gazes vacantly at him.

CHARLEY
(continuing)

You know pigs is as smart as dogs?

Billy just looks at him.

CHARLEY
(continuing)

That's true. Knew a fella in El Capitan who trained his pig to bark at strangers.

Billy HISSES smartly at this chubby kid and walks idly through the mud, fishing a black cigarette from his pocket.

CHARLEY
(continuing)

Whatchya doin' here, boy?

CHARLEY (CONT'D)
(a beat)
Mr. Tunstall has a soft spot for runaways and derelicts--vagrant types--but they can't be any geek off the street; have to be handy with the steel, if you know what I mean. Earn your keep.

Billy gets a foot up on the fence and begins scaling the side of the barn. He gets up on a window ledge about ten feet above the sty and sits like a punk, cigarette nipped in his overbite.

CHARLEY
(continuing)
We work for Mr. Tunstall as regulators. We regulate any stealin' of his property. We're damn good, too.

Billy mugs his smoke, looks out past the loquacious Bowdre.

CHARLEY
(continuing)
Not that I'm a pistoleer or a knifesmith like that greaser Chavez Chavez over there. I'm a pugilist. But, uh . . . I ain't expectin' you to know the explanation of that word . . . hog boy.

Billy, perched on the sill impishly, blows a gust of smoke at Charley, then cracks a caustic grin which makes his eyes recede in his head.

BILLY
You don't even know why I'm here.

CHARLEY
Sure I do. You're a runaway, derelict, scud-bottom vagrant, ain't ya? Like the rest of us.

Billy HISSES.

CHARLEY
(continuing)
Footpad, maybe? Petty thief? Rob a bank? Kill somebody? Rape your--

On "kill somebody," Billy winks a blue eye, a sudden, intense wink that makes its point with Charley. The heavy-set regulator deciphers this.

CHARLEY
(continuing; busting balls)
Killed somebody? Hoo-dewey--that puts you in luxury class in the bunkhouse.

Suddenly Dick Brewer comes hell-bent-for-leather around the corner on a sweet black mare, his colt pistol held high.

BREWER
REGULATORS Cattle look spooked down i the lower forty, let's go take a look!

Chavez Chavez breaks into a run down the alley, unhitches his horse, mounts and bolts after Brewer. Dirty Steve and Doc canter by, Doc wielding buffalo rifle, Steve sawed-off shotgun. Charley pulls up his ranch pants and starts for a crow-bait pony.

CHARLEY
You ain't a regulator, boy; you stay with the pork.
They're smarter than you--ya might learn somethin'.

As Charley runs for a horse, Bonney plucks his cigarette butt from his lips and pinches it in a hard, deliberate aim at Bowdre's back and glares at him with dancing blue eyes that contain something dangerous. Frightening.

As the regulators thunder off in proud formation--Hell's Angels on horseflesh--Billy Bonney remains perched on the window sill of the barn, pigs wallowing in the slime below.

INT. TUNSTALL'S MAIN HOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

With John Tunstall presiding over the supper table, his five young men and the newest kid, Billy, are heartily consuming a heavy meal of salt pork, beans and coffee.

Billy is scrubbed clean, his hair still wet, slicked flat on his head.

TUNSTALL
(beholding his brood with amusement)
Well now, look at these appetites, hmm? William, have some more pork?

Billy, his mouth packed with beans and corn bread, sticks his fork out to the center plate and spears another slab of meat. All eyes are on him a bit suspiciously.

BREWER
Ever work beef before, Billy?

With a mouthful of pork and nostrils that don't seem to work, the kid takes his time answering.

BILLY
Worked some out Fort Sumner way . . . Pete Maxwell's place. Did the chow line, that's about it. But I have a way with cattle.

Dirty Steve GUFFAWS suddenly--a chortle which he extinguishes by shoveling a spoonful of beans in his mouth. He SNICKERS behind tight lips, shifting his eyes toward Bowdre whose bulk quivers in an effort to keep from laughing. Brewer smiles handsomely as he eats while Doc and Chavez just observe.

TUNSTALL
What seems to be so jolly funny, Master Stevens?
That's not any sort of proper manners.

Steve wipes his mouth with a napkin and sits back. Fueled by the giggles of the others, Charley decides to impersonate this constricted voice.

CHARLEY
(high and through his nose)
I have a way with cattle . . .

Now the LAUGHTER really picks up. Even Doc cracks a boyish smile, and Chavez looks up from his meal alertly, trying to pinpoint the joke.

TUNSTALL
Charles! Congratulations. You and Steven will be washing the dirty crockery alone this evening.

CHARLEY
Sorry, John. Struck me funny.

TUNSTALL
And to William. The both of you.

CHARLEY
Apologies, William. Just hackin' on ya, that's all.

DIRTY STEVE
Yeah, just hackin' on ya.

Brewer has been staring at the new kid, lost in thought.

BREWER
Rumor has it you killed a man. You don't look like the killin' sort.

DIRTY STEVE
Why'd you kill him, Billy?

Billy slowly turns his weasel eyes onto Bowdre. Then Dirty Steve.

BILLY
He was hackin' on me.

Charley quickly lowers his head and resumes eating. Everyone else follows suit except Tunstall who winks at Billy and slides the bowl of beans down toward him.

TUNSTALL
Did you get enough beans, William?

Billy reaches for them gratefully, showing some beaver teeth.

EXT. TUNSTALL'S RANCH - NEXT DAY

Tunstall walks across his property carrying an inventory notebook. Billy walks along beside him, cradling an armful of corn for the pigs. Tunstall is counting off requirements.

TUNSTALL
I'll expect you to follow the rules, Billy. I'll expect you to learn proper manners and to become somewhat of a gentleman. Clothing is to be washed twice a week, beds are to be made up promptly each morning.

Tunstall sees something on the horizon and slows his step, his eyes zoning in on approaching horses. billy stops walking, displeased with this lecture. He throws his load of corn down and stares after Tunstall. Chavez Chavez is grooming a horse nearby.

He notices Billy's disobedient display.

BILLY
What is this, a goddamned boys' school? This is shit.

But Chavez ignores him, reaching instead for a long blade hidden in his saddle. He sticks the blade behind him, in his belt, and hurries past Billy. And now Brewer comes walking past, quickly, drawing his Colt. Billy looks back and forth now between Charley, who hustles along with a boot pistol, and Dirty Steve clutching a sawed-off shotgun.

Billy looks over at the troop of horsemen approaching Tunstall. Doc passes by him, his .50 caliber specialty on his shoulder.

CHARLEY
(tensely quiet)
Come on, kid, fall in. Here comes half of Ireland.

MOVING TOWARD US

a grim procession of thirty men--intimidating men--riding at a walk. The MURPHY-DOLAN FACTION comes to a stop outside Tunstall's main house where the Englishman stands, his rag-tag band of rehabilitating miscreants behind him.

LAWRENCE MURPHY sits high on an Indian Paint, staring coldly at Tunstall as he comes out of his house. An Irish immigrant, he is the same age as the Englishman but with the facial mileage of a heavy boozer.

At his right sits JIMMY DOLAN, a tiny, younger Irishman, well-dressed, well-armed, and smiling. Always smiling.

Between the two ranchers rides Lincoln County SHERIFF WILLIAM BRADY, a dark, husky man with a wire-hard beard cut into a tight diamond at his lips. He wears a .36 Pocket Police and keeps a rifle across his pommel.

And behind the three front men, there is an assembly to be reckoned with: a collection of Southwestern badmen--the All-Star Depopulation Team--twenty-five of them--between thirty-five and sixty years of age.

(Historically known as the SEVEN RIVERS WARRIORS, Doc Scurlock has his own title, simply referring to them as the shitheads.)

Billy walks up behind the others, drawing his pistol. He stands at the back of the formation, trying to fit in.

TUNSTALL
Good afternoon, Gentlemen.

BRADY
(Irish accent)
John . . . Mr. Murphy and Mr. Dolan here have lost another six cattle. They believe you've taken them.

BREWER
That's a fargin' lie, and you--

TUNSTALL
--Richard.

Brewer retreats and Tunstall stares at him for a time, as if manners were the issue at hand.

TUNSTALL
(continuing)
Sheriff Brady. Mr. Murphy and Mr. Dolan are going to continue coming to you and claiming that I've taken their property until I'm pronounced a thief and shaken out of Lincoln. I have never touched their property. I have no cause to.

The Murphy-Dolan guns BUZZ and LAUGH quietly, as if amused by the refined language so rarely heard.

MURPHY
(thick Irish)
Well. The Belted Earl has spoken. Look behind ya, Earl. all I see are hired thieves. You run a bleedin' shop for footpads, thieves and dance-house loungers.

TUNSTALL
And what's that behind you, Lawrence? The Philadelphia Orchestra? Firstly, I must say, I do resent your calling my help thieves. These boys are promising young men learning trades. Acquiring an education.

DOLAN
We've had ya pegged as the sort that likes educatin' young boys, Tunstall.

MURPHY'S SHITHEADS GUFFAW with the wild abandon of school-bus kids hearing a dirty joke. Tunstall's young regulators glare at the older warriors. Eyes lock . . . and burn.

Murphy stiffly swings his bulk off his saddle--we've never heard so much CREAKING OF LEATHER--and he slides down to the ground to look Tunstall in the eye. The Englishman doesn't flinch as a tense moment of silence passes between the two men.

Billy squints in concentration, watching the conflict intensify.

MURPHY
(quietly, to John)
Tunstall, rumor has it that you're going to be bidding for the government beef contracts. It is just a rumor, isn't it?

TUNSTALL
Lawrence, you own a ranch and a store. I own a ranch and a store. You're going to try to make money. I'm going to try to make money. It's simple.

Murphy moves closer to the Englishman, guides him away a few steps from the gathering. He speaks softly.

MURPHY
John. You see our good Sheriff sitting up there on that horse? Do you know how much money he's invested in my company?

Tunstall does a take.

MURPHY
(continuing)
His life savings, John. Do you know how much interest the Territorial District Attorney and the U.S. District Attorney have in my securing those beef contracts? Judge Bristol? Quite a family, my boy. So you are not just being disrespectful to me . . . you're being disrespectful to what is known as The House. The Ring.

Tunstall turns a hard look on Murphy. They are both standing a pace from Billy, who watches and listens.

TUNSTALL
I made quite a long steamship journey from London, Mr. Murphy. Never threw up so much in my life. And I scoured the land on horse from New York City to California to here, and I found my plot. I've put every penny I had into this endeavor, and it has not been easy. So I shall be damned if I'm going to be dissuaded by a word like corruption. It's an ugly word. Now take your sheriff and your henchmen and get off my land.

Murphy stops at his horse, gripping the bridle. He turns and glares at the Englishman. He no longer speaks quietly.

MURPHY
This is a new country. We won't be bowin' down to ya no more, Englishman. Get ready for Hell.

TUNSTALL
They who sow the wind shall reap the whirlwind.

Murphy spits in Tunstall's face. The Regulators go for their guns just as TWENTY-FIVE MURPHY-DOLAN GUNS CLICK ready. Tunstall raises a hand to his boys as does Brady to his.

After a tense moment, the sheriff nods his head toward the mountains and the line of warriors swings out and follows the sheriff and their employers off the Tunstall property. The shitheads throw deriding remarks at the younger gunmen as they pass by.

When they have gone, Tunstall CLAPS his hands once.

TUNSTALL
Back to work, Chaps. Let's go.

But it takes the boys awhile to thaw, unnerved by the army and the threat. Billy remains in his tentative stance, looking after his employer.

EXT. TUNSTALL'S RANCH - MAIN HOUSE - NIGHT

The cattle are quiet, the winds still. The main adobe house is lit in one room downstairs and one up top.

CHAVEZ CHAVEZ (O.S.)
(reading poorly)
For men of enter . . . enterprise and push . . . there is no better place than New Mexico.

And we can see silhouettes in the upper, lantern-lit window.

INT. TUNSTALL'S DEN

Sitting either in chairs or on the floor, the six young men are strewn about, sleepy after a hard day and heavy meal. Tunstall sits with a leg thrown over the other, hands folded at a knee, watching Chavez struggle with an article in the *Santa Fe New Mexican*. Reading lessons.

CHAVEZ
(continuing; stammering)
Especially good for those men with a little . . . cap . . .

TUNSTALL
Capital, Master Chavez. Very good.

Chavez looks up, relieved to be finished.

TUNSTALL
Steven?

Dirty Steve, sitting stone-faced and tinkering with his spurs, reaches hesitantly for the news.

DOC
Dirty Steve. Eat it up.

Steve takes the paper and locates the spot where Chavez left off. But Steve is what they would refer to today as dyslexic and has an even greater struggle than Chavez.

DIRTY STEVE
(monotone)
Of course, every-one-does-not . . . suc-ceed. There are plent-y of men who will never suc-ceed any-where . . . ?

BREWER
We got a roomful of 'em right here.

LAUGHTER fills the room. Everyone but Billy, sitting on the floor, aloof.

TUNSTALL
Rubbish.

DIRTY STEVE
(still reading)
You can-not pick up gold dollars in the streets in New Mexico any-more than you can in New York . . . ?

TUNSTALL
Well done.

Steve leans back against the wall, looking mean.

TUNSTALL
(continuing)
William?

Billy sniggers sarcastically as he takes the newspaper from Dirty Steve. He passes it toward Doc.

TUNSTALL
(sternly)
Well, excuse me, Billy, how very sorry I am to offend you. But we are sitting in this room learning to read and write for a reason. Perhaps you feel that in order to survive, one need only draw his firearm and blow his way through obstacles. Not so in the new world, my young man. So, pick up that journal and finish where the other boys left off or go back to your home on the bloody streets.

Billy glares hard at Tunstall. Doc, trying to help things along, hands the paper to Billy. He even finds the spot for him. Billy reads defiantly, stuttering and stumbling through it, but with Doc helpfully WHISPERING the hard words, he completes the assignment.

BILLY
(reading)
Young men who don't know how to do any kind of business and have no energy or application had better stay at home near their relate-ives so they can be taken care of. They are not wanted here and will only come to . . . . grief . . . but men of . . . enterprise are practically sure of success.

Billy finishes and sticks the paper out to no one in particular, and he has a self-conscious, covert smirk on his face.

TUNSTALL
William! Splendid! Splendid reading. Did you all hear that?

Brewer takes the paper next, and, as he turns the pages, Tunstall leans out of his chair and rubs at Billy's head. Billy pulls back defensively, eyeing Tunstall as if he's going to shoot him.

TUNSTALL
(continuing)
Okay, Richard. Read to us, if you will, about that louse Governor's new bill--page three is it? Clearly, like William now.

And William H. Bonney sits back against the wall, gradually relaxing and now touching the top of his head where the Englishman patted him. And there seems to be a glow--if slight somewhere in his eyes.

EXT. TUNSTALL'S RANCH - DAYS LATER

Billy is toiling in the hog pen when John Tunstall's carriage rolls up alongside the fence.

Another young footpad, thief or dance-house lounger, sits beside him--a scruffy young man named McCLOSKEY, barely twenty, peach-fuzzed and dog mean, wearing a tattered red flannel and red scarf around his neck. He packs a pistol on his left hip.

TUNSTALL
--if you do wish to stay, we've got just the job for you.

Billy suddenly grins big and offers a muddy hand up to the new youth. McCloskey takes it, nods hello and Billy jerks him downward while climbing up the fence.

McCLOSKEY
Heyyy!

TUNSTALL
Master McCloskey, meet William H. Bonney.

McCloskey spits in the mud and points a finger at Billy who is LAUGHING adnoidally in donkey tones.

Tunstall cracks the horses on and gives Billy a big smile.

TUNSTALL
Now, my young friend, I say you're due for a trip to my store . . . if they haven't burned it to the ground yet.

Billy nods, looking down at the boot that shows his toes.

EXT. TUNSTALL'S STORE - LINCOLN - DAY

A one-mile dirt road dotted with shops, a hotel, saloons.

Tunstall's store, a one-story, flat-roofed trading post, is situated almost directly across the street from L. G. Murphy's "Big Store." LOCALS walk to and fro.

INT. TUNSTALL'S STORE

Supplies of every kind, ranging from meat and flour to saddles and cartridges. Tunstall hands a hat to Billy, a derby variation, and he tries it on. Tunstall studies the look and nods in approval.

Then comes a fancy vest. A new gunbelt. And the *coup de grace*--a new Samuel Colt .44 double-action pistol. Billy handles it with reverence, opening the chamber, spinning it, studying the mechanics.

SEBRON BATES, a black storehand, stands by smiling, observing the transformation.

EXT. TUNSTALL'S STORE - A SHORT TIME LATER

The front door swings open and Billy steps out, adorned in his new outfit, packing his new steel. He eats some snacks from a paper bag like a poor kid spoiled for a day.

Tunstall comes out behind him, carrying a briefcase and grocery bag. Almost immediately a MEXICAN-AMERICAN FARMER--a Lincolnite--runs up to the Englishman, breathless.

FARMER
Mr. Tunstall. I'm in big problem.

Tunstall stops, lends an ear, while Billy struts in his new garb a little self-consciously.

FARMER
(continuing)
Mister Murphy and Mister Dolan have given me credit. Much credit. Now they say if--

TUNSTALL
--if you don't pay back now, they'll attach your farm, right?

FARMER
Si, si, si! My farm, my sheep, my goats . . . .

TUNSTALL
Ygenio, Old Chap, here's what you do. My attorney, Mr. Mcsween, will be back in town in a day or thereabouts. You go see him. He's working for me on this very problem.

FARMER
God bless you and your family.

TUNSTALL
In the meantime, come to me for your supplies, or any other credit you need. You tell the other farmers as well.

FARMER
Si, si, thank you. I am afraid, sir.

Billy, who has stepped a few paces down the walk, is looking across the street at--

MURPHY'S STORE

where some MEN hang out in front. Lawrence Murphy walks through the gathering and stands at the edge of the walk, glaring across the street at Tunstall. He draws on a cigarette.

REVERSE ON BILLY

admiring his reflection now in the plate glass window of Tunstall's store. He lays a hand on his new gun, draws, and twirls it quite skillfully.

CLOSE ON COLT DOUBLE-ACTION

twirling backwards and forwards in SLOW MOTION, show-boating. When the gun is slid back into its leather, normal speed resumes and we find ourselves at--

EXT. TUNSTALL RANCH - LATER

Billy is twirling his gun, standing in an alley between the pig barn and a bull stall. He grips his new pistol in his right hand, his rifle in his left, aiming both . . . then quickly throwing the pistol into his holster, the rifle into his right, and drawing his old pistol with his left--the "killer shift."

Billy takes a step back and collides with Charley and Steve who have walked up on him.

CHARLEY
Dick catches you malingerizin' and you're gonna be crow bait, Bonney.

Billy looks into Charley's face and grins.

BILLY
You got a tin can? I can keep a tin can in the air for forty-three seconds with pistol and rifle.

CHARLEY
Oh, I'm shakin in my boots.

BILLY
Yep. I can pink a cow between the eyes at two-hundred yards.

DIRTY STEVE
Yeah? I can piss from here to Albuquerue and flood the Rio Grande.

BILLY
Nah, I can't believe that--

CHARLEY
Billy. I bet ya can't ride that bull.

Billy glances over at the stall where a HUGE WHITE BULL slams his rack into the fence repeatedly. He looks back at Charley and grins; a grin that makes his eyes vanish.

BILLY
Don't dare me.

CHARLEY
I'm darin' ya.

Billy instantly lays his rifle on the ground and scales up the stall.

DICK BREWER

is hauling hay down the alley with Doc, Chavez and McCloskey. He stops dead as he sees--

THE WHITE BULL

exploding out of the stall, Billy Bonney clinging to its back, and like a spineless rag doll, he is instantly hurled up and over the massive horns, landing so hard something has to be broken.

The bull tramples him.

TUNSTALL (O.S.)
Billy!

AT THE FENCE

Brewer proceeds quickly with his hay bales, the others following to avoid any lashing from John.

DIRTY STEVE
(looking at Billy)
He ain't all there, is he?

Doc jumps the fence and serves as rodeo clown to keep the bull from stomping the flat-backed kid. Tunstall, wearing white shirt and lunch bib, climbs through the fence and runs toward Billy, panicking.

TUNSTALL
Billy! Are you all right?!

He kneels beside him, touches his dirty face. Billy is CRYING, crinkling his face, spitting dirt.

TUNSTALL
(continuing)
Don't be daunted, Billy.

BILLY
They're laughin' at me. I'll shoot them all in their sleep and feed 'em to the pigs.

TUNSTALL
Now now . . .

BILLY
I quit.. .

TUNSTALL
Billy.

Tunstall waits until Billy is looking him in the eye. He lays a hand on his shoulder.

TUNSTALL
(continuing)
Why do you think I took you to town today and had you properly togged out, hmm?
(a beat)
Because I see in you the potential for something extraordinary. You're a revelation to me everyday--every day I see it more. The makings of a man . . . a leader. I like you, Billy.

Billy lowers his eyes, dusts off his trousers.

TUNSTALL
(continuing)
Now what do you say, hmm?

Billy smooths the dents in his hat, puts it back on.

BILLY
I wanna ride the bull again.

Tunstall stares at him, blankly for a moment, then emits his high-pitched LAUGH, slapping Billy's shoulder.

INT. TUNSTALL'S MAIN HOUSE - DEN - LATE DAY

Another reading lesson. Tunstall presides over the seven scrubbed young men strewn about the room. Doc is reading.

DOC
Woh, Sweet Celsa, daughter of the sands, he called.
Follow me and we will ride toward Paradise.
(an aside)
Sounds to me like he's givin' her a heap a'shit just to get her petticoats up there.

LAUGHTER. Even Tunstall does his high chuckle. But then the sound of SPOOKED CATTLE causes Brewer to draw his colt, spin the chamber and SNAP it ready.

Billy sees this. He draws his own gun and does the same, copying Dick.

EXT. TUNSTALL RANCH - DAWN

A barn door flies open and the seven Regulators STAMPEDE, YELLING AND TRILLING like Indians.

OUT ON THE RANGE

a pack of TEN BONITO CANYON MEXICANS on horseback are moving through Tunstall's cattle.

They are an intimidating group, wearing their hair long--some braided--and packing a lot of steel. On detecting the onslaught, they wheel and try to short-cut out toward Seven Rivers. But--

THE REGULATORS

are on them in an instant. Doc is up in a two-point position, specs on, Sharp's buffalo gun aimed carefully and POW!

A BONITO RUSTLER

is spun out of his saddle.

BREWER
Drop the steel, amigos!

ANOTHER RUSTLER in the group turns, gripping a huge rifle and begins to go for the break-action when something, an object, sizzles through the dry air and nails his hand clear through. A blade. He HOWLS in shocked agony.

CHAVEZ Y CHAVEZ

sweeps for his belt and throws a second knife.

THE RUSTLER

takes it in his other hand, the rifle falling down along his chaps. He is pierced through each hand with a knife, and he holds them up to the sky, too shocked to repeat his piercing scream.

THE REGULATORS

encircle the band, keeping them covered. One by one the cattle thieves throw down their weapons.

Dirty Steve rides up alongside a stubborn rider and jams his sawed-off in his ribs, making him cough up a long knife.

Brewer keeps his six on another while McCloskey and Charley weave in and out, frisking the men on horseback.

BREWER
Murphy send you?!
(no reply)
Ha!? Murphy send you up here to hit on the English?

Doc rides alongside a big steer and studies its brand.

DOC
Woh-ho-ho, lookee here, Betty Dear. They weren't taking John's cattle. They were bringing a few of Murphy's in. Trying to make it look like John's stealing.

The RUSTLERS MUTTER SPANISH amongst themselves.

CHAVEZ
Go ahead. Speak Spanish.
(he smiles)
I'm Lithuanian.

They stop. And now one of them, a quiet man at the back of the group, eyes Chavez's back while slowly sliding a hand down his leg.

BILLY'S EYES

jump to the--

HAND GOING DOWN THE LEG

<u>drawing a boot pistol</u>, going for the kill.

BILLY'S HAND

swings up in an eighth of a second. FIRES his Colt.

THE RUSTLER

is knocked off his horse, a lead ball in his skull. A SECOND RUSTLER DRAWS and Billy beats Brewer to the shot, blowing the bonito man away.

THE REGULATORS

all look at Billy. Brewer seems most surprised. Dirty Steve amused. Charley CHUCKLES, and Doc nods, impressed. Chavez leans over and pats him on the leg.

BREWER
Anybody else wanna test their abilities?
(no answer)
Collect your cattle . . . return 'em all to Murphy.

Brewer glances down to see that Billy has jumped off his horse and is stripping off the deadman's boot pistol, like collecting a slain deer's rack, a raccoon's tail.

BREWER
Tell them to leave Tunstall alone. Adios, assholes.

With a jerk of his right rein and a dip of his head, the foreman leads his boys back to the house at a victorious gallop. Doc is staring at Billy, amazed.

EXT. LINCOLN PROPER - NIGHT

TOWNSPEOPLE are hurrying down the walks toward MUSIC--high-spirited, Mexican polka music that carries from a place where a FIRE casts a red and dancing light.

THE DANCE SQUARE

is alive with DANCERS AND MINGLERS, and the BAND sits close together on a stage, wailing on accordion, guitar, drums and banjo.

A CARRIAGE

pulls up to the fandango sight, driven by Tunstall dressed in his going-to-town finest.

Right behind him are his boys, on horseback, scrubbed clean and dressed to the nines. They look out toward the dance, excited.

TUNSTALL
All right, Chaps. On your best. And if you're going to pursue the opposite sex, make sure she comes with a Spanish Land Grant.

Tunstall winks, and all leap down to the street.

ON THE SQUARE - A SHORT TIME LATER

Dick Brewer is dancing a simple step--a Vermont clog--with a cute MEXICAN GIRL, while the other young ladies admire his poise from the hay bale sidelines.

Chavez does a traditional step with a HEAVY GERMAN GIRL.

NEAR THE FIRE

Charley, Steve and McCloskey hang out around a mesquite tree. Charley chain-guzzles beer, belches, while--

ALONG THE SIDELINES

Billy approaches a YOUNG BLONDE of thirteen, asks her to dance. She refuses. He moves down to ANOTHER LADY, twenty-five or so, a redheaded teacher-type, buttoned up to the chin. She, too, smiles kindly, but passes.

John Tunstall, strolling the square, watching over his brood, spots Billy in his fruitless hunt and moves in toward him, gracefully intercepting him on the way to a third girl.

Placing an arm around the young man, he walks several steps WHISPERING something in his ear. Billy leaves Tunstall's side, tries his luck again with the third girl. Bingo. he's got a dance. And Tunstall's got a smile of satisfaction as he walks on.

DOC SCURLOCK,

quite the dandy in white shirt, black suspenders and string tie, crosses the dance floor, periodically putting his specs on to scan the lady population but removing them every time he suspects being seen.

After a time of looking about, he stops in his tracks. Puts his specs on. He looks as if he's beholding some magnificent sight on the horizon.

ACROSS THE SQUARE

a SMALL GIRL, an incredibly small girl, Chinese and pretty; dressed in flowing gown, her face painted like the older ladies, holding a fan and using it well. She moves in SLOW MOTION, for this is how Doc sees her, awed at first sight.

Beside her stands a man in contrast to her fragility--JACK PIERCE, a stout six-footer, impeccably dressed and wearing a heavy mustache. He moves in SLOW MOTION as well. But where the little China Doll appears as a dream, Jack Pierce is the stuff of groggy nightmares.

And he is surrounded by other men who generate an air of power: JUDGE BRISTOL, a rotund old man, U.S. DISTRICT ATTORNEY RYNERSON, and his partner THORNTON--all having a drink, a cigar and a LAUGH that surfaces every so often above the MEXICAN MUSIC.

DOC SCURLOCK

removes his glasses and starts slowly across the square.

BILLY AND BREWER,

meanwhile, are dancing side-by-side with their ladies and it has become something of a competition. As Brewer kicks out a clog, Billy emulates him, moving quicker, crazier, and grinning with abandon. People begin to congregate.

BY THE MESQUITE TREE

three sullen faces look on.

McCLOSKEY
Look at that Billy Bonney go.

DIRTY STEVE
He ain't all there is he?

CHARLEY
Well, he's there enough to be dancin' with a pretty lady while we stand here pullin' our tallywhackers.

McCLOSKEY
Damn straight.

And all three adjust their clothes, start sheepishly across the floor.

DOC SCURLOCK

smiles at us; a good looking kid.

DOC
Hidy. My name's Doc.

YEN SUN

stares at him with painted eyes, covers most of her face with her fan. Her eyes move over to the man beside her.

ON THE SIDELINES

Jack Pierce takes in this young man with the killer smile and a touch of the gambler in his dress style.

PIERCE
What can I do for you, Young Man?

DOC
Well, if you're an acquaintance of the young miss, Sir, I was hopin' I could impose upon you to entreat the lady to dance.

Pierce's eyes go from 20 to 0 flat-out icey black as he stares down at Doc. But he maintains his insincere grin. The politicians around him STOP CHATTING and look on, curious. Pierce senses the audience and keeps his cool.

PIERCE
Why certainly.

And he takes Yen's slender arm, offering it to Doc who finds this strange. Doc nods politely to the man and leads the tiny girl across the floor.

The politicians RESUME THEIR DIALOGUE. All but Pierce who follows the couple with his eyes.

BILLY AND BREWER

are cutting heels side-by-side and everyone is around them, WHOOPING. Brewer glances down at Billy's new boots as they shuffle up a storm, and he looks nervous for a moment.

until Billy, overwhelmed by the merriment, turns a clog into a wild jig and then goes way over the top, whirling like a puppet at the hands of a deranged puppeteer.

Relieved, Brewer cracks a smile and leads his girl to the sidelines while Billy, abandoned now by his girl, wheels and saws air-fiddle, even though a SLOW BALLAD is being played.

DOC SCURLOCK

leads Yen Sun with a grace and style that Tunstall must be proud of.

DOC
What's your name?

YEN
Yen Sun.

DOC
That man with you . . . I see he's chatting with Judge Bristol. He's a politician?

YEN
Yes. Mr. Jack is District Attorney.

Doc raises a brow, swings the girl away from the men.

YEN
He's my guardian.

As Doc guides her along, he glances over to see--

THE POLITICIANS

welcoming Lawrence Murphy and Jimmy Dolan into their circle, shaking hands, LAUGHING.

DOC

quickly turns his back to them, beholds the China Doll once more.

DOC
(quoting Shakespeare)
So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows . . . as yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.

Yen looks quizzically at the boy.

YEN
Pardon me?

DOC
It's something I wrote. I'm a poet.

Suddenly, Mr. Pierce steps in and takes Yen's arm back from Doc , who stares expressionlessly into the man's hard face.

PIERCE
Excuse me, Mr. Poet. We must be getting along.

DOC
Yes, we're getting along swimmingly, thank you, Sir.

And Yen Sun quickly moves to Pierce's side, looks away from Doc as if caught doing something naughty.

PIERCE
I've just been informed that you're with the Tunstall company. I guess we won't be seeing much of you around now, will we? Wherever you migrate to, best of luck, young man.

And with a smile, he starts away, Yen on his arm.

PIERCE
Good evening.

Yen looks over her shoulder at Doc as Pierce nearly drags her along.

DOC
(bitterly)
Good evening.

VOICE (O.S.)
Good evening.

Doc wheels to see ALEX A. MCSWEEN, Tunstall's lawyer, a tall, sharp, Canadian transplant. On his arm is his wife SUSAN, a thin, pretty brunette dressed in flowing gown.

DOC
Mr. Mcsween.
(he takes his hand, then Susan's)
Mrs. Mcsween.

SUSAN
You look gallant this evening, Josiah Scurlock.

MCSWEEN
John's cleaned you right up, hasn't he?

Doc LAUGHS goodnaturedly, but is soon gazing off into the crowd, troubled.

SUSAN
Someone break up your dance, Doc?

DOC
District Attorney. He's the gal's guardian.

MCSWEEN
Guardian? Now that's one of the more gentle euphemisms going about, I must say.

Doc looks at him questioningly. Alex waits for John Tunstall to come by and ask Susan to dance. He then leans close to Doc.

MCSWEEN
Mr. Pierce had one of his shirts ruined at a laundry in Silver City. He took the celestial woman's daughter as payment. She is . . . house entertainment, as I understand it.

Doc stares into the crowd where he last saw her.

DOC
If they want what you have, they just take it, don't they? Just like that.

MCSWEEN
That's about what it amounts to. Little boys playing with power. Playing God.

ON THE SIDELINES

sitting on a bale of straw, Billy tries to catch his breath. Dirty Steve walks up to him, sits down.

BILLY
Boy, that Brewer can't dance to save his--

DIRTY STEVE
--I killed a man, too, ya know.

Silence. Billy looks at the peach-fuzzed face, searching for the point of the statement.

DIRTY STEVE
(continuing)
Nigra. Bonham, Texas. Painted a church with him. Remington ten guage, twenty-eight inch double barrel.

Billy stares at him for a long moment, then brings his hands together and begins CLAPPING, sarcastically.

Dirty Steve reddens and he looks away, watching the musicians.

DIRTY STEVE
Asshole.

Billy GIGGLES.

CHARLEY

stands before FOUR SCHOOL TEACHER TYPES, holding his beer with his little finger out.

CHARLEY
(an English accent)
Medicine. I shall receive my degree from St. Michael's come July, and I'll be practicing here in Lincoln till my missionary tour of the islands.

The women are quite smitten.

ON THE SQUARE

Tunstall stands off with Alex and Susan Mcsween. They form a tight little circle, and are careful that they are not overheard.

TUNSTALL
Did you go up to see the governor, Alex?

Alex nods slowly, and his expression is not an encouraging one. Tunstall looks worried.

SUSAN
He wouldn't see Alex, John.

MCSWEEN
I found out afterwards that Murphy made an eighteen-hundred dollar contribution to his campaign. They've got the governor, John.

Tunstall looks sick for a moment, but soon gains his composure.

TUNSTALL
Musn't be daunted, Alex. You've heard of English tenacity, haven't you?

Alex and Susan smile warmly at their friend.

TUNSTALL
(continuing)
Let's go have a drink to the bloody--
(Tunstall curbs his tongue)
--a drink to the obstacles in life that build one's character, hmm?

And they walk across the square.

MOVING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION ACROSS THE SQUARE

a tremendously TALL MAN wades through the crowd, a BLONDE WOMAN on his arm. He is six-foot five or six, and although a candidate for the tall, dark and handsome type, there is something about his face that suggests Edgar Allan Poe. Especially now as he drifts by the fire and the light catches his sunken, glassy black eyes.

AT THE HAY BALES

Billy remains seated. Dirty Steve has left and McCloskey stands nearby.

BILLY
(with boyish wonder)
Hey. Look at the giant.

McCLOSKEY
That's Juan Largo; s'what the Mexicans call him anyway. Looks important, but he's just a sheep, cattle and whore thief.

BILLY
Hey, when does a fella stop growin'? Ya know, what age?

McCLOSKEY
I don't know. Eighteen, nineteen.

BILLY
Yeahhhh . . . but ya can't believe everything you hear, McCloskey. A lot of superstition goin' around.

Billy's eyes light up as the big fellow walks toward them. McCloskey looks alarmed when Billy suddenly springs up and places himself in the tall man's path, gawking up at him as if he was a circus giant. The man stops and throws a quick smile at his girl, then gazes down patiently at Billy.

Billy folds his arms and looks over at McCloskey, grinning wisely. The man is smoking a cigar and Billy stares at it.

TALL MAN
Hello there.

BILLY
Hallo. William Bonney, sir.

And he offers a small hand. The tall man engulfs it.

TALL MAN
Pat Garret. Pleasure.

Billy pumps the hand of PAT GARRET . . . and doesn't stop.

GARRET
Excuse us, Friend. We have a request for the band.

Billy moves aside just a hair and grins after Pat Garret and his lady.

BILLY
Yeahhh . . . I bet I grow to be just as big as him. Bigger.

McCloskey looks at Bonney and shakes his head, bewildered.

ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE

we catch a very quick glimpse of Jimmy Dolan WHISPERING something to EL LOCO, a brick shithouse of a Mexican farmhand. Dolan and El Loco go separate ways.

JOHN TUNSTALL

stands with Alex and Susan Mcsween when El Loco walks by him and purposely bumps into him. Tunstall stumbles.

TUNSTALL
I do beg of your pardon.

El Loco--six feet of solid fight--shoves the Englishman into the crowd. When he staggers back into another guy, a miserable looking SILVER MINER, the miner turns on him. But

the glint of a blade appears out of nowhere and Chavez crosses between his employer and the miner, training a stout piece of cutlery on the man's throat.

CHAVEZ
Go home.

The miner backs off glowering, but now El Loco has finished removing his vest and he is coming for Tunstall.

EL LOCO
Why you push, Gringo? Come here. Me and you.

CHARLEY (O.S.)
No, jolter-head. It's you and I.

Charley cuts in, taking off his hat and handing it to Alex Mcsween. Unbuttoning his sleeves, he throws a glance back at Tunstall and pops a question.

CHARLEY
(continuing)
That correct, John? You and I?

TUNSTALL
Yes. Yes, i'tis.

CHARLEY
(turning back to El Loco)
You get that, Senor? You . . . and I.

And on the "I", he guns a left jab that could knock a steer to its knees.

El Loco staggers back while Charley shifts his weight and gets into a straight-backed bare knuckler's stance, rolling his fists high in the air. El Loco lunges like a big animal and, again, Bowdre fires--a combination.

The CROWD WOOOOOOOOS, then goes silent as El Loco spins drunkenly; then comes back with a wide punch. Bowdre ducks it, a picture of grace and hammers his opponent square in the nose. El Loco drops like a hundred pounds of wet bran.

Bowdre pulls up his drooping trousers and sweeps his eyes across the circle of spectators, a little proud. Tunstall comes up beside him, laying a hand on his back gently and guiding him off the square. When the others catch a wink and a nod from their surrogate father, they follow instantly.

Grinning wide, Billy walks up beside Doc.

BILLY
Pugilist.

DOC
Ain't that somethin'?

And the two follow Tunstall and the other Regulators toward the carriage.

LOS LOBOS MUSIC stays with us throughout--

EXT. WOODLAND CARRIAGE ROAD - SUNRISE

The carriage CREAKS along, Tunstall seated comfortably and flanked on both sides by his boys and their mounts. They are ALL SINGING THE FANDANGO SONG--Tunstall too--loud and not quite in key.

Charley is miming Spanish guitar dramatically, and LAUGHTER mixes with their singing as they ride into the pink traces of sunrise. A family. And then--

FFFFFTTTT! A sound explodes from the brush. CAMERA SWINGS WILDLY ONTO--

--Brewer drawing his Peacemaker, searching the grasses.

--Billy throwing up rifle and pistol.

--Doc cocking his massive .50.

--Charley cocking his drunken eyes, baffled and surprised and then finally relieved by the sight of--

WILD TURKEY,

a flock of the huge birds, fluttering up out of the brush, WARBLING in terror as they skitter over the chaparral.

THE REGULATORS

regain composure.

BREWER
(laughing)
Fargin' featherheads scared the Jesus outta me.

Charley SPUTTERS with a LAUGH, runs fingers through his curly hair nervously.

And then McCloskey breaks forward on his horse going after the turkey. Dirty Steve follows, WAR WHOOPING. Then Charley draws his big boot pistol. Brewer, still laughing, follows too, replacing pistol with rifle.

Only Billy remains by Tunstall's side.

TUNSTALL
Oh, go on, Billy. Boys will be boys.

Billy looks at Tunstall for a moment, then out at the turkey hunt. A big grin breaks across his pale face and he kicks his horse, joining the party, getting into a two-point position, aiming rifle to the sky.

IN THE BRUSH

horse HOOVES THUNDER . . .

ON THE ROAD

Tunstall LAUGHS, takes out his pipe and fills the bowl with tobacco. But behind him, barely coming INTO FOCUS, are some men on horseback moving at a walk.

IN THE BRUSH

Doc aims his rifle . . .

ON THE ROAD

Tunstall strikes a match. Behind him, the RIDERS get closer. It is the Seven Rivers Warriors--CRAZY BILL MORTON in the lead--ten of them, raising their rifles.

Tunstall's eyes stop smiling as he lights his pipe. He is now aware of sounds behind him. He turns his head, stiffly, puffing on his pipe.

MORTON
By jove, Old Chap, welcome to America.

IN THE BRUSH

seven GUNS FIRE at the turkey flock . . .

ON THE ROAD

ten GUNS FIRE at John Henry Tunstall.

IN THE BRUSH

a turkey drops. But all heads are turning toward Tunstall in the distance and the sound of GUN SHOTS.

ON THE ROAD

Tunstall is spun off his carriage, peppered with black powder blasts. His horse is shot through the head.

IN THE BRUSH

the Regulators look on, devastated. Frozen.

BILLY
NOOOOOO!

Bonney kicks his horse and races toward the scene. Brewer is right behind him, the others fall in, weapons ready. But then Brewer spots something else up on the ridge:

NINE MORE GUNMEN

thundering down, WHOOPING, TRILLING, racing toward the young guns. And then ANOTHER SIX from another direction.

THE REGULATORS

register the odds. All but Billy riding daredevil toward certain death, SCREAMING in a nasal war cry. Doc rides up beside him, grabs one of his reins.

DOC
NO! Too many! Too many!

And he gets Billy turned around. The seven of them ride deep into the chaparral, popping brush and kicking up smoke, and just making it out of reach of the twenty-five Ring guns.

EXT. CHISUM PASS - OVERLOOKING TUNSTALL'S RANCH - NIGHT

Seven blackened faces gaze out over FLAMES that chew at Tunstall's Ranch, the only decent home any of the boys have ever had.

Down in a tangle of brush, Billy kneels, tearing juniper needles off of trees and dashing them to the ground. His face is red, his eyes streaming tears. Angry, flustered tears. The grin is still there though, held up by those prominent front teeth.

BILLY
Bastards! Fuckers!
(crying deeply)
He was the only one . . . you sonsabitches.

He runs his baggy sleeve across his lip, wiping tears and nose run-off and dirt.

MOVE SLOWLY ACROSS each young face, pain and rage and confusion registering in their eyes as they behold the burning ranch.

MCSWEEN (V.O.)
(Scripture)
If a man die . . . shall he live again.

CUT TO:

EXT. TUNSTALL'S STORE - NEXT DAY

A quick and cautious funeral is being conducted in a small vacant lot just behind the store. Tension hangs in the street.

The seven young men carry John's coffin to the freshly dug grave where Mcsween stands, holding the Bible. Susan stands near him as does Sebron Bates, the black storehand, and JUSTICE OF THE PEACE WILSON, a short old man.

All fight tears as the coffin is lowered into the earth. As Dick Brewer begins a PRAYER, Mcsween walks away several steps with the JP. They speak quietly.

MCSWEEN
There's not a fool in Lincoln County you can pay to go after those men. They're with The Ring, JP.

JP
Can't say as I blame them.

MCSWEEN
You're the Justice of the Peace, Wilson. You have the power to serve warrants through special constables.

JP
Yeah, but what special constables?

Mcsween looks over at the gravesite, at the seven boys, most of them crying. The JP follows his gaze and looks discouraged.

MCSWEEN
Deputize them, JP. It has nothing to do with Brady. We only want the men who fired the shots.

JP
Those boys have a rough past, Mcsween. Most of 'em are still wanted in some other state.

MCSWEEN
Are you gonna deputize them?

JP
No. I'm not, Alex. I'm sorry. Ain't right.

MCSWEEN
Okay. Then you go tell them.

Wilson swings a nervous look onto Alex then back at--

THE BOYS

standing around John's grave--guns on their hips, tears in their eyes.

CUT TO:

A HAND

SLAPPING down on a Bible.

Then ANOTHER HAND on top of that. And A THIRD. And FOUR MORE HANDS SLAP down atop one another, stacked on the Holy Book.

SIX RIFLES

in a row are CRACKED READY, creating one intimidating sound.

A KNIFE

twirls and jams into a sheath at Chavez' hip. There are at least ten other blades there, stuck in leather.

A BARN DOOR SMASHES OPEN

and the Regulators burst out in a mounted formation of seven. SCORE KICKS IN as the young guns storm down the main road of the plaza, leaving a gathering of TOWNFOLK behind.

Mcsween, sitting in a carriage with Sebron Bates and Susan, watches the young men depart, and he looks concerned. Maybe a little regretful. Bates cracks the horses on and takes Mr. and Mrs. Mcsween out of town.

EXT. HORREL'S BAR - DEAD MAN'S HOLE - A SHORT TIME LATER

There is nothing around this lop-sided, one-story adobe and wood saloon. There must be a town center somewhere nearby, but it is as if this whiskey mill was removed to the outskirts, like tossing a shovelful of dogshit just outside the yard. We have never seen a worse hell hole anytime, anywhere.

Out in front, a FAT MEXICAN WOMAN sits with her back to the front wall, her skirt pulled up to her hips and her legs spread wide. Only an empty tequila bottle hides her genitalia, and she rattles off SPANISH in a low guttural voice.

A YOUNG BOY is trying to pull her away, but she is heavy and this frustrates him. TWO MEN look on, expressionless, not offering a hand. Someone staggers out in the sunlight and the two men offer him some help, walking, removing his purse and his gun . . .

REVERSE - THE REGULATORS

sit on their mounts across the street taking in this sewer of a drinking spot.

CHAVEZ
Muy tipico.

DOC
You got that right.

CHARLEY
Hell, Doc, you grew up in a hole worse than that.

DOC
I been cultured since, Charley.

BREWER
Okay--Henry Hill's supposed to have been in there with a lady since noon. We're gonna show him the warrant and take him home.

THE SALOON DOORS

fly open and a LONG GANGLY FELLOW, a cadaverous miner with a beard flowing over his chest, lumbers out SNARLING in the bright sun. He goes to the wall and reaches for the Mexican woman's bottle. When the little boy protests, he kicks him in the leg, sending him onto his back in the dust.

REVERSE AND CLOSER - ON THE REGULATORS

CHARLEY
(losing a little nerve)
Yeah . . . we gotta take him.

McCLOSKEY
Yeah, I'd say we do.

Charley looks over at a stoic Brewer. Brewer looks down the line at McCloskey, then Steve. And then Billy, a small form squinting into the light.

BREWER
Hey, uh, Billy? Why don't you go inside and have a look-see?

Billy looks at Brewer and smiles, then fixes his eyes on the dangerous hole again.

BREWER
(continuing)
Go ahead, Billy. Do it. Just see if Hill's there. If he is . . .
(hands Billy a warrant)
. . . bring him to us.

Billy takes the warrant, slips it in his jacket and nonchalantly swings down off his mount and walks briskly across the dusty street.

Brewer and Bowdre exchange furtive, almost guilty glances. Doc looks away, not wanting any part in it. McCloskey swallows.

INT. HORREL'S BAR - DAY

The joint is packed-to-the-gunwales with HIDEOUS TYPES, drinking, gambling, LAUGHING AND ARGUING. The SMOKE is thick, funneling in cross-pockets in the DIM LIGHT that makes its way into the room.

Billy enters WHISTLING and eyes fall upon the ungainly boy in crushed black hat, canvas jacket and pants stuffed into boots. A FEW AGGRESSIVE SHOUTS are thrown at him as he slips through the crowd, beady eyes scanning faces.

THE BARTENDER

looks exhausted leaning on his counter, his hand an inch from a pistol that he keeps in a drinking glass. A sign over the cash box reads:

"IF YOU HAVE TIME FOR A DRINK,
YOU HAVE TIME TO WRITE YOUR MOTHER.
DON'T FORGET MOM.
LETTER PAPER SOLD HERE."

A CINNAMON BEAR,

chained to the leg of a chair in which a BIG MAN sits, paces nervously back and forth, HOOTING occasionally, drawing a similar response from the patrons. FOUR OR FIVE ONLOOKERS study the animal from a safe corner.

BILLY

looks at the bear with great interest . . . and then a voice, a name, jars him from his trance.

OLD MAN (O.S.)
Hill Boy! You in for one more?

Billy wheels to locate--

HENRY THOMAS HILL,

one of Brady's scum riders, standing with a hard, UGLY WOMAN in a corner. He wears two pistols, Remingtons, and carries a rifle.

HILL
Yeah, I'm in. Gotta use the toilet first.
(tugging his belt)
Janey, would you be kind enough to come in and help me? Doctor told me not to lift anything heavy.

JANEY
Doctor's gonna tell ya you'll never use it again, you talk that way to me, Henry Hill.

Hill LAUGHS hard and kisses her breast before walking slowly toward the bathroom. Neither he nor Janey pay any mind to the simple-looking boy passing by them and hurrying to the men's room himself.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - HORREL'S BAR

A long horse trough against the wall makes up the toilet facilities. The bottom is carved out to allow waste a free run out the back of the saloon and into a river. Flies and other bugs fill the trough, dot the walls.

Billy stands with his back to us at the trough, having a wee. Hill enters taking a stand three or four feet down the trough from the kid. He lays his rifle across the back of the toilet, unbuckles his pants with a long GROAN, relieves himself. Once he gets started, he looks over at the kid who is WHISTLING a tune.

CLOSER ON BILLY

shifting his eyes onto the man beside him, then slowly turning toward him, his hands still down at his crotch, as if he's going to piss on him.

BILLY
Hello, Henry!

Sticking out seven and a quarter inches through Billy's fly is his Colt .41 double-action, and it is aimed belly-level at the Murphy man.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ON TROUGH

and Hill, horrified, as a POWDER CHARGE burns through his lower abdomen. His hand grabs his rifle on the trough just as Billy FIRES AGAIN, killing him.

A ROAR rises out in the bar, FOOTSTEPS. Billy starts to run, then stops remembering the warrant. He produces the paper and crouches, stuffing it in the deadman's mouth.

He then leaps onto the rim of the trough and throws the latch on a tiny window, opening it. Like a supple rodent, he wiggles out the tight space.

INT. HORREL'S BAR

SIX MEN rush to the bathroom, guns drawn. They kick the door in and spot the open window.

EXT. HORREL'S BAR - FRONT

The Regulators are on edge, trying to figure out the unseen action when TEN MEN burst out the front door looking for the murderer.

They FIRE on Billy as he races for his horse, but the young guns fall into action:

--Brewer draws his pistol, BLASTS off a round of charge, dropping three men.

--Dirty Steve FIRES his sawed-off, clearing the porch. He takes a ball in the arm, CURSES.

--Chavez Chavez, gripping a throwing blade in his right hand sees no need to waste it and twirls it back into his belt.

--McCloskey FIRES a Dragoon.

--Charley Bowdre is BLASTING a boot pistol blindly and erratically, missing everyone, but doing a good job on the saloon wall.

Billy jumps on his horse and FIRES ONCE for good luck at the carpet of dead or dying men. As the other Regulators thunder off with only Steve hurt, Billy lingers a moment to assess it all, then follows.

BREWER
(as he rides)
Bonney! You weren't supposed to smoke anybody!
We've got warrants! We're the law!

BILLY'S POV - OVER HIS SHOULDER:

the other PATRONS of the saloon run out to see what happened, to get a look at the gunmen. They point at the seven riding high.

REVERSE ON BILLY

as he unhitches his trousers, rises in a two-point stance, and drops his drawers enough so he can flap open his union suit and bare his backside to the crowd.

As we begin to lose the riders in the distance, DOC'S VOICE is heard OVER, reading from a paper; reminiscent of reading lessons only weeks back.

DOC (V.O.)
(reading)
Nine men lay dead or at death's door yesterday noon following a gunfight between Lincoln resident Henry Hill, forty-five, and what patrons have called a "kid."

EXT. ADOBE WALL ALONG LINCOLN ROAD - DAY

Behind the short wall The Regulators lay in hiding, Doc reading from the *Mesilla Independent*.

DOC
A local miner has identified the kid as one Henry McCarty, also known as William H. Bonney, nineteen or twenty. In a flaming shootout, the kid, Billy, killed Mr. Hill then took on an onslaught of Hill partisans, bringing his damage to six verified slayings. Bonney is believed to be the captain of a deputized gang from--

BREWER
--captain?

DIRTY STEVE
How come it don't say nothin' about the two I closed out?

Billy looks toward the paper, grinning.

CHARLEY
Shit, Dick, you sent a lamb to the slaughter and he walked out king sheep.

Brewer doesn't look happy about this. Chavez smiles, sharpens a cow horn knife on the adobe wall.

CHAVEZ
The Kid. El Chivato.

Doc hands the paper to McCloskey and looks out over the wall, on the lookout for more of the wanted men.

McCLOSKEY
Damn. Murphy's gonna go crazy.

DOC'S POV:

on the street Yen Sun, the China Doll, is walking along by herself carrying a parasol.

REVERSE ON DOC

looking back at his boys and noticing he hasn't been caught.

DOC
Hey. I'll be right back. I gotta go see somebody.

BREWER
Doc. You know they're gonna be lookin' for us. Don't be stupid

But Doc goes over the wall. Brewer leans back against a tree, looking tormented.

DIRTY STEVE
If that boy's peeder were a dowsin' rod and poon-ta were water, he'd be in the well business for sure.

Billy rolls the chamber on his Colt, snaps it ready.

BILLY
Who's next, Dick?

Brewer just stares at him.

EXT. LINCOLN ROAD - SUNSET

Flowers are for sale out in front of Wortley's Hotel and we note that as Doc Scurlock walks past, his coattails in the breeze, derby cocked to one side, a bunch of white carnations vanish.

ON THE SIDEWALK

Yen Sun walks straight ahead, unaware of the young man hurrying up behind her, alongside her.

DOC
Pardon me. Hidy.

Yen looks over, sees Doc, keeps walking.

Doc removes his hat with one hand, offers her the flowers with the other.

YEN
I cannot accept that, thank you.

Doc has to run a little to keep up with her.

DOC
You walk fast for a little thing, Yen. I just wanna talk to you.

YEN
You must like trouble.

DOC
Do I look like trouble to you? I'm a poet. Carrying flowers!

YEN
(walking fast)
And a gun. A big gun.

DOC
It's a big town.

Doc keeps shuffling along with her.

DOC
(continuing)
Yen, please.

Yen keeps walking. Doc stops, deflated.

DOC
(continuing)
Okay, Yen Sun, don't take them. But do take a message to District Attorney Pierce for me.

Yen hears this and quickens her pace.

DOC
(continuing)
You tell Jack Pierce that The Regulators are gonna clean house. And I mean The House. And you tell him that he can't own us like he can own a little China girl for the price of a ruined shirt!

Yen flinches but holds her head high. She begins WEEPING, silently, and walking so fast that it has to qualify as running. Doc looks after her, flustered.

DOC
(continuing)
I'm sorry, Yen. I wanna help you. Yen!

Doc begins to pursue her around the corner of the post office and nearly runs smack into--

THE SEVEN RIVERS WARRIORS

--Murphy's shitheads, trotting aggressively.

DOC

does an awkward about-turn and walks as fast as Yen in the opposite direction. When he hurries past Wortley's Hotel, he sticks the flowers back where they came from.

A tall man, pricing flowers, does a take when he sees this, then returns to sniffing roses. We might recognize him as Pat Garret.

INT. MASONIC LODGE - ABOVE MURPHY'S STORE - DAY

Sheriff Brady, decked in a suit, presides over a meeting between Murphy-Dolan and the Santa Fe Ring. The ten or twelve men sit in leather chairs around a long table. Pierce, Judge Bristol, and Murphy smoke cigars. The mood is tense. Serious politics. Murphy holds a newspaper.

MURPHY
The little juvenile bastards wanna play war, well, we'll give them their game. I want them dead. All of them.

BRADY
I got two of my best trackers out sniffin' them down . . . and enough fire power to put out Fort Stanton ready to go out any second now. They don't have a chance in hell.

As the Ring members nod in approval, Murphy rises, all three-hundred pounds of him, and walks to a window sill where a bottle of rye sits beside a jug of cider. Murphy throws a double-shot of the booze into a glass of cider, swills it as he turns to face the men at the table.

MURPHY
I want their smilin' heads mounted on the roof of the Englishman's store. I'm serious. Let that bloody lawyer Mcsween get the message, and let all those little, pissant farmers who think Tunstall was a hero see what happens to his worshippers.

The Ring sits shrouded in cigar smoke, smug looks on their faces, not as worried about the young vigilantes as Murphy obviously is. Not yet anyway.

Pierce throws down a stack of contracts on the table.

PIERCE
Let's get on with these contracts, shall we?

Murphy returns to the table.

EXT. JUNIPER MAZE - OUTSIDE LINCOLN - DAY

Trackers Morton and Baker are hot on the trail of The Regulators. Morton leads on foot, bent over, fingering the grass and bushes. Baker follows, walking both horses and looking around.

As they weave through a maze of shoulder-high juniper bushes, Morton stops dead. He kneels at some horse droppings.

MORTON
Shit.

BAKER (O.S.)
What's wrong?

MORTON
No, I mean I found some. Horseshit.

Morton picks up a handful and breaks the dried scat open.

MORTON
They've come out from the Sierra Bonita just this mornin". The horses have been grazing wild. Bonita grass, still wet with dew. Pretty damn good, eh Baker?

No answer. Morton turns around. And goes white.

The Regulators are staring right at him, standing in tight formation, firearms aimed.

CHAVEZ
Not that good.

Chavez is up front, kneeling on the back of Baker and keeping a blade pressed at the shithead's throat. The Murphy men have been out-tracked by an Indian.

EXT. CARRIAGE ROAD - CLOSER TO LINCOLN - DAY

The Regulators form a wall around the two shackled shitheads as they escort them to Lincoln. Billy is at the rear.

BAKER
You don't unnerstan', Dick. By killin' Henry Hill, ya'll started a war.

BREWER
By killin' Mr. Tunstall, you all have started the damned war, Baker!

MORTON
Just the same, we're talkin' fifty, sixty men against your what? six? seven? We're with The Ring, Dick.

As he looks around to count, Billy spits him in the face.

BILLY
We're gonna bury you.

BREWER
Quiet, Bonney.

BAKER
You gonna, Dick? That happens, you know what'll happen to ya'll. Ya can't beat The House, Dick.

BREWER
We're takin' you to jail. No killin'.

Billy, spitting on the men slowly and deliberately every four or five seconds, raises his nasal voice.

BILLY
Objection, Your Honor. These men are goin' to the grave in the name of John Tunstall.

Brewer slows his horse to get in close to Bonney.

BREWER
I said, quiet, Billy. I don't want that kinda talk. Law don't talk like that.

DIRTY STEVE
Yeah, well law don't kill innocent ranchers neither, right?

DOC
Dirt Face, listen to the constable--

BILLY
--take the sonsabitches to Capitan Mountain and blow their brains out.

McCloskey rides up on the other side of Billy.

McCLOSKEY
Hey, c'mon, Billy. Easy.
(to Brewer)
Dick, I don't think we should go by way of Capitan.

BREWER
Why's that?

McCLOSKEY
I think Murphy-Dolan are gonna be watchin' the trail in. They'll ambush us. We should go straight to Lincoln.

Brewer looks out at the trail ahead and thinks about it. And it is here that McCloskey furtively flits his eyes to Baker and Morton, then lowers them again. But someone's noticed.

Billy stops his horse dead and hits McCloskey with a look that could chill the blood of a firefly.

BILLY
Hey.

McCLOSKEY
(trying to smile)
What's the--

BILLY
--hey, I saw that.

CHARLEY
Saw what?

BILLY
He knows what I just saw.

McCLOSKEY
(a nervous laugh)
No, I don't, Billy. I don't know what you're talkin' about.

BILLY
Where's the ambush, McCloskey? In Lincoln? You're trying to steer us away from Capitan cuz you know your men . . . Murphy-Dolan men, are waitin' to jump us in Lincoln.

BREWER
Billy! McCloskey's with us. What are ya talkin' about? He's a Regulator.

BILLY
He used to work for Murphy and Dolan. That's what I'm talkin' about. He's a spy.

BREWER
He's one of us now. He's been with us. We made a pact. Right, McCloskey?

McCLOSKEY
Right. Jesus, Billy.

Billy looks down, shakes his head, then offers a hand to McCloskey. McCloskey takes it, relieved.

BILLY
I'm sorry. Hey.

McCLOSKEY
It's okay, Billy. We're all gettin' a little, you know . . .

BILLY
(holding tight to McCloskey's hand)
I'm sorry I didn't sniff you out sooner, you stinkin' cock-a-roach.

BOOM! His left hand draws and blasts a powder burn into McCloskey's temple but he still grips his hand, keeping him from flying off the saddle. BOOM! He shoots him again through the nose, then lets him fall.

BREWER
BILLY!!

Morton and Baker haul ass. Doc sets up and nails Baker. When he rockets from the saddle, Dirty Steve opens up on him with the sawed-off. Brewer is wheeling on his horse, CRYING OUT, trying to get a fix on it all. Billy shifts aim to Morton and UNLOADS in his back. Chavez hurls a blade, striking Baker as he hits the ground.

BILLY
Court adjourned.

BREWER
Moron! You're outta line, you sonuvabitch!

Charley is backing his horse away from Billy, and he looks scared shitless.

And Dirty Steve is keeping his distance too, shotgun still in his grip. Chavez is staring at the dead bodies.

A tense moment passes between Billy and Brewer, who stare at each other. Brewer's right hand is inches from his gun. Doc sees this.

DOC
Dick. I think he might be right. McCloskey's been actin' strange. Real strange.

Convinced that Dick isn't going to draw, Billy hops off his horse and goes to collect his prize from the dead.

DICK
Well, then that means we just killed three more Murphy men.

CHARLEY
Christ, Brady's gonna hang us for sure now.

DIRTY STEVE
What we gonna do, Dick?

CHAVEZ
We gotta go to Old Mexico. We've got no--

CHARLEY
--Dick, what we gonna do?

BREWER
(exploding)
Quiet! Everybody close their fargin' lips for a goddamned second and let me think.

HOOFBEATS. Close.

DOC
Shit, we better skin out.

BREWER
(panicking)
Okay, everybody skin to the river.

The boys haul ass, and as Brewer passes Bonney, he pulls up and points a threatening finger at him.

BREWER
You! You better stop believin' the newspapers! You ain't the captain here and you ain't no Robin Hood!

Billy has found a Jew's harp on McCloskey. He TWANGS a flat note. Brewer looks back toward Doc and Chavez.

BREWER
(continuing)
Get that idiot on a horse.

And Brewer kicks his mare forward, CURSING under his breath.

EXT. CAMP BY RIVER BANK - DUSK

While Dick sits etching a stick in the dirt, frowning in concentration, Doc reads the *Santa Fe New Mexican* to the others who lay about, resting.

DOC
(reading)
Advices from Lincoln say the young lad of lightning-rapidity, iron nerve and marvelous skill, apparently single-handedly took down Morton and Baker of the Murphy-Dolan faction, including a miraculous shot of fifty yards.
(an aside)
I'll take that one, thank you, Sir.

Billy removes his hat and scratches behind his neck, grinning as he listens.

DIRTY STEVE
Single-handedly?

DOC
Hey, and they got a picture. They got a picture that says "Billy the Kid." But . . . it ain't Billy.

Brewer pulls the pages away from Doc to see--

A TIN TYPE PHOTOGRAPH

of Richard Brewer smiling handsomely in ranch gear.

BREWER

stares in amazement.

BREWER
Hey. That's me.

THE REGULATORS

all stick their heads in to look.

BREWER
This is bullshit! That's me. Can't the papers get anything right?

Doc has retained the page bearing the continued column and continues right on reading.

DOC
(reading)
Advices from sources say that "The Kid" is tall, handsome, and unequaled in the elements that appeal to the holier emotions.
(laughing)
This country needs a hero, I am tellin' ya.

Brewer walks away shaking his head, his eyes searching the countryside nervously.

DOC
(continuing; to read)
However, Sheriff Brady of Lincoln has hired none other than John Kinney--

All heads turn. Brewer wheels.

DOC
(continuing to read)
--and his Dona Ana Bunch to hunt down Billy The Kid and the gang.

CHARLEY
Wonderful.

BILLY
Who's Kinney?

DOC
(reading on in answer)
--an ex-soldier who suffered an injury and is now a bounty hunter. According to a doctor's report, this injury, a blow to the head, produces--under emotional or physical excitement--paroxysmals of a mixed character, partly epileptic and partly maniacal.

DIRTY STEVE
What's that mean?

CHARLEY
It means he can whup some ass.

BREWER (O.S.)
Hey, Doc? Can you come here a minute?

Doc rises, handing the paper to Billy. Charley and Steve share it with him, worrying over the new hunter and his bunch.

OUT IN THE BRUSH

Brewer stops walking a good distance from the others. Doc stands with him.

BREWER
We can't go north cuz Murphy-Dolan's got men out of Fort Sumner. We can't go east cuz Brady and his posse are closin' in that way, fast. We can't go south cuz John Kinney's on his way up now, and what's to the Bunch, forty? We can go west through the Valley of Fires, but there's--

DOC
(shaking his head)
Uh-uh.

BREWER
--the Mescalero Reservation.

DOC
Chief Victorio is having an extremely good year with scalps, no thank you, Richard.

Brewer stands quietly, kicking the toe of his boot off the ground as if his feet are cold.

BREWER
I don't know what to do.

DOC
I don't know what to say. All sounds like a six-man funeral to me.

Brewer nods, looking off into the cottonwoods from which Chavez emerges walking barefoot and carrying his hat upturned and filled to the brim with something; some sort of strange flowers.

BREWER
Now what the hell's he doing?

Chavez continues in his light bouncing walk toward the camp.

BY THE CAMPFIRE - AN HOUR LATER - NIGHT

A large tin pot is boiling over a small fire. Black liquid runs down the side, curdles. Chavez drops a small, round, bark-light substance into the rolling boil. Then another.

The Regulators sit around the fire staring at Chavez. Billy sniffs the air then covers his nose. Charley spits.

CHARLEY
I'm gonna ask ya one more time, Chavez, then I'm gonna hog-tie ya and beat your ass. What the hell is it and why does it stink so bad?

Firelight plays on the Mexican-Indian's wet face. When he speaks, it is intense; a power we have not yet seen from Chavez.

CHAVEZ
We've come to a place where we are lost,no? Very lost. When an Indian is lost, he must reach into the Spirit World to find the way. On the Spirit Road, he'll be shown a sign. To get there, he must enter The Church.
(waving his hand over the boiling peyote)
This is "the way" . . . The Church.

Chavez has been putting on ranch gloves during this explanation and now he grabs the tin, raising it out of the flames.

CHAVEZ
(continuing)
We are lost. So I will find us the way.

DIRTY STEVE
Oh Christ, this is all we need, huh? some red-ass Zuni mambojahambo. We're runnin' outta time here!

Chavez brings the tin to his pursed lips and swallows the hot black drink. He takes a second swallow, then lowers the pot to his lap. When Billy nudges him, he looks surprised and hesitates for a time before passing the tin to him.

Billy raises the peyote-derivative to his lips and drinks heartily for a moment before sitting back with a nasty face.

CHARLEY
Any good? What is it?

CHAVEZ
Peyote.

Charley grabs it from Billy and takes a long defiant drink, then offers it to Brewer. The constable declines. Doc reaches over the flame for the tin of peyote derivative.

DOC
I tend to like Mexican, to be flat-out honest with ya.

And Doc swallows a long one, COUGHING at the finish, smacking his lips bitterly.

DOC
(continuing)
Shit! Whatchya do, mistake a coyote for a cow and milk the wrong udder? Damn, that's rough.

Dirty Steve takes it, guzzles some down. Wipes his chin. He swallows some more.

The tin comes back to Chavez who drinks long and steady. Again he hands it to Billy. And it goes around and around and . . .

THE SUN IS RISING

in the distance over the Valley of Fires--acres of black lava formations that glow under the aurora.

A RAVEN

courses the fiery sky, then comes to land on some carrion within range of the fire. CAMERA MOVES SLOWLY around--

THE FIRE

where we pick up Billy. His face. His eyes. He is sweating like a sick man. A FIDDLE begins a strange solo flight.

FLASHBACK - SEPIA - KANSAS, 1870

Ten year-old HENRY McCARTY (Billy's real name) stands with his stepfather, WILLIAM ANTRIM, a hard-faced prospector with hopelessness in his eyes. Billy has a goat with him, a young Alpine buck.

ANTRIM
Billy. Help me put Nancy in the cart an' we'll take her for a ride.

Billy grins and hops once, CLAPPING his hands. He helps his father get the goat in the cart.

EXT. CAMPFIRE

Billy's eyes.

FLASHBACK - KANSAS

The goat is in the cart, roped down. And Antrim is raising something from his hip. A knife.

Billy SCREAMS out, lunges at his stepfather's leg. Antrim knocks him down, kicks him. The GOAT IS BLEATING as his throat is severed.

Antrim resumes his work but--

Billy grabs Antrim's leg and bites it. Antrim kicks him again, and, as Billy rises, tries to run, the stepfather backhands him. Billy grabs at Antrim's hip, swiping an old pistol. He hightails it, turning and aiming the gun at him every few feet . . . but just bluffing angrily, CURSING AND CRYING AND SPITTING . . . and running.

EXT. CAMPFIRE

Billy's eyes. Glaring. Tearing. Dancing blue eyes.

FLASHBACK - SEPIA - ARIZONA

Young Billy stands at the end of a deserted road, FIRING the old pistol at the side of a barn, his face contorted.

The bullets pierce the wall. ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR--number FIVE nails the advertisement for CHIEF TWO-MOON'S SNAKE OIL. NUMBER SIX hits the picture of a man in a bowler derby between the eyes.

EXT. CAMPFIRE

Billy's eyes, closing tight. Opening.

FLASHBACK - SEPIA - FORT GRANT, NEW MEXICO

Billy, peach fuzz at his chin, is digging through a trash basket on a crowded street. WINDY CAHILL, a blacksmith who tips the beam at two-eighty, snags him from behind, slams him to the wooden walk. He then lifts up the trash basket, spills it over the homeless youth's head.

Billy draws the old pistol--BLAM!!

EXT. CAMPFIRE - DAWN

BLAM! ! Dirty Steve, wild-eyed, has just fired his sawed-off at nothing.

DIRTY STEVE
Did you see the size of that chicken?!

Brewer is out of his bedroll, pistol aimed, and now as he takes in the sight of his hallucinating crew, he spits at the ground and lies back down. Disgusted.

Charley is bent at a stump, vomiting.

DOC IS WALKING

through a growth of desert primrose.

DOC
Butterflies . . . find one flower . . . and fly to it . . . and stay with it. They don't know why it's their flower. They just feel it . . . and fly to it. She is my flower and I'm--

BLAM!! Steve fires at Doc, blasting a hole in a cactus inches from his thigh.

DIRTY STEVE
--chicken! Are you fellas seein' the size of this cock-a-doodle-goddamned-do?!

Doc only stares, a gentle look on his face, and he continues walking.

DOC
We don't know why . . . we just feel . . .

CHAVEZ ON HIS HORSE

looks disturbingly intense, his back straight, his long hair hanging down--the Zuni Indian in him surfacing--and he is taking his horse through an endless series of circles; tight, little rotations as if not sure where to go.

And then he breaks off West, leaving the others in the dust. But shit, this is the guy who's supposed to be finding "the way," and it doesn't take long for every young man to hit saddle leather--a few falling and trying again--and setting chase.

Brewer is last, looking torn, MUTTERING angrily to himself.

EXT. RUIDOSO TRAIL - SUNRISE

The Regulators--peyote stoned except for Brewer--ride behind Chavez. Dirty Steve is lying low, hypervigilant; Billy, an odd assortment of cactus flower and desert weeds stuck in the brim of his hat, grins with great enthusiasm; while a topless Charley wears his shirt draped over his head and under his hat, resembling a foreign soldier of some kind.

Brewer tags along against his better judgment but knowing there's nothing else he can do, and he can't believe Doc Scurlock who rides very close to him WHISPERING with sacrosanct intensity, tears of heavenly vision in his eyes.

DOC
It's all destiny, Dick. It's all figured up there and ya can't fight it.

Brewer does a take . . . then makes the sign of the cross.

A SIGN

reads "MESCALERO APACHE INDIAN RESERVATION." The horses walk past it and--

INTO THE RESERVATION

where Brewer lowers himself in his saddle and cringes. He tries to tap at Charley who has been getting excited about a song he once heard and has fondly remembered.

CHARLEY
(singing)
Birdie hop out and crow hop in,
Three hands round and go it again,
Allamane left and back to pardner.

A ROW OF ADOBE HOUSES

suddenly comes alive with faces. And within seconds, TWO HUNDRED NATIVES, Apache Indians, crawl out, armed for business. From both sides of the dirt trail they converge, leaving the entourage little room to ride through.

Chavez says nothing, does nothing, just being, riding.

CHARLEY
Hey, Chavez, why ain't they killin' us?

DIRTY STEVE
Cuz we're in the Spirit World, asshole. They can't see us.

Billy, flowers sprouting out of his hat, waves fervently.

BILLY
Hi. Hallo.

THE NATIVES

exchange curious glances, lower their rifles. One of them who might be CHIEF VICTORIO, short and muscular, craggy-faced, raises a hand, confused.

THE REGULATORS

stoned as bastards ride on.

BILLY
(continuing)
Hallo there, Indians. Hi. We're in the Spirit World.

Brewer rides low, praying, hardly able to believe he is doing this.

CHARLEY
Come to yer pardner once and half,
Yellow hammer right and jaybird left . . . .

But they make it, reaching the end of the reservation property and descending down into pine forest.

THE NATIVES

return to their adobe houses to go back to sleep. The WIND WHISTLES through open windows and doorways for a time, and then SEVERAL LAUGHS rise up from the silence within.

EXT. BLAZER'S SAWMILL - RUISDOSO, NEW MEXICO - DAY

A sawyer outfit constructed of cheap wood on a lopsided stone foundation. Historical date fades in:

APRIL 4

Dirty Steve is standing outside, shotgun in one hand, a half-eaten turkey leg in the other. He is on watch patrol.

A FLY BUZZES around his turkey leg. He blows at it.

INT. BLAZER'S INN

The Regulators sit around a fine meal in which there is included three bottles of red wine. Two waiters, DAVID EASTON and EMILE BLAZER, are innocuous-looking New England types, and nervous as hell.

BREWER
Lord forgive us for our wrong-doin's--
(eyes on Billy)
--and for our misguidance by heathen religions--
(eyes on Chavez)
thank you for keeping us alive. And please guide us in doing the right thing. Please--

BILLY
Hey, Dick. Really. Hah? It's gettin' cold.

Brewer explodes, suddenly drawing his pistol, but Billy has beat him to the draw. The waiters jump back against the wall, spilling mashed potatoes and turnips. Brewer and Bonney stare down the barrels of each other's pistols. Brewer is trembling with anger.

BILLY
(continuing)
I could'a killed ya, Dick. I don't wanna kill ya. I wanna eat.

DICK
When we finish this meal, we're goin' out into the saw yard, you little rodent, and we're gonna see who has the right to run this group of lawmen.

Billy nods and Brewer slowly lowers his gun, making dead sure Bonney is doing the same.

DOC
Richard, would you be kind enough to pass the gravy?

Dick lets a long sough quiver free, then passes the gravy.

EXT. BLAZER'S SAWMILL

Dirty Steve finishes his turkey leg, wipes his hand on his shirt and then searches the distance at the sound of a VOICE--a gruff, babbling voice.

STEVE'S POV:

at the far end of the rough mill road, a short, squat, wizened man in his seventies is approaching on a froth-flecked BAY MULE, saddled down with an over-abundance of gear.

ANDREW "BUCKSHOT" ROBERTS

is square-cut and ruddy, poorly dressed. And as he climbs down from his mule with a gimp, he looks like a bagman of the Old West. Only instead of bags and rags, he totes artillery: two rifles, a heavy Sharp's buffalo blaster, a pair of Remington pistols, and a

cartridge belt doubled twice, overloaded. In the relaxed manner of one donning a jacket, he dons the accouterments of a one-man army.

Buckshot means business.

REVERSE ON DIRTY STEVE

his eyes widening. He drops his turkey bone.

INT. BLAZER'S INN

Easton and Blazer look on at the scruffy, hungry bunch. Steve barges in, breathless. Easton and Blazer jump, again.

DIRTY STEVE
Mighty well-heeled man is comin' this way.

A beat.

BREWER
Just one?

Dirty Steve nods. Charley looks out the window, swallows some wine.

CHARLEY
It's ol' Buckshot Roberts.

BREWER
Roberts! We got a warrant for him. He was with the gang.

DOC
He coming to surrender?

CHARLEY
Hell, don't look that way.

BILLY
He any good?

CHARLEY
They call him Buckshot cuz if ya stood him on his head, ya'd get a pound a half of buck, he's been shot so many times. The old cuss can only bring a gun to his hip but he's got that down pretty good. Seen him dust two fellas in Las Vegas. Or was it Las Cruces?

Billy holds his Colt out over the set table and spins the chamber, locking it ready with a hard SNAP.

BILLY
Introduce us.

And he twirls the gun--forward, backward--into his holster. The two waiters exchange a scared eye roll.

EXT. BLAZER'S MILL - DAY

The boys come out, still eating turkey, wiping their hands on napkins and gazing down the road at--

BUCKSHOT

the CLANKING, GRUNTING, walking armoury. Undaunted by the six young guns closing off the end of the road, he keeps right on walking, straight at them.

BREWER (O.S)
(chewing turkey)
Got a warrant for you, Roberts. Get 'em up.

BUCKSHOT
(gruff)
I don't got no business in that war no more, you pecker-head sonuvabitch! I'm my own man! And right now I'm here for the one-hunert and fifty dollars Sheriff Brady's put on The Kid's head. One hunert and ten for the rest of you.

THE REGULATORS

exchange glances as they bring their weapons up.

DOC
Sweet disposition on this feller, hmm?

ANGLE ON;

BUCKSHOT
Let's dance.

And Robert's leg suddenly buckles from under him as he lets himself drop to one knee, throwing up a pair of forty-five caliber rifles. He BLASTS A DOUBLE CHARGE, TWICE, and as the Mcsween boys OPEN UP on him, he rolls ponderously behind a wooden well foundation. His left side reveals three nasty puncture marks but he shakes it off.

THE REGULATORS

jump for cover behind a collapsed fence. But under the ENDLESS BLASTING from Roberts, the fence is splintered and Chavez is shot through the right side of his chest, near his collar bone.

Bowdre and Doc jump up and try to move to better cover. A CHARGE knocks Bowdre's gunbelt off, ricochets and smashes Doc's right hand, knocking the Sharp's from his grip and taking off his index finger and thumb. Chavez and Doc's HOWLING MERGE into one painful wail.

BEHIND THE WELL

Roberts, lying on his side, reloads. He feels something at his leg and looks down to see a throwing knife imbedded in his calf. Wincing, spitting some blood, he begins to crawl away.

THE REGULATORS

behind the fence are stunned by the one-man show. Bowdre sits, pulling down his trousers to see if the shot has clipped his hip. Chavez is flat-backed and may be dead. Doc is on his knees, rocking back and forth.

BILLY AND BREWER

are side by side behind a fallen stone wall keeping Roberts at bay with double-six guns.

BREWER
(breathless)
He just crawled into the shitter.
(looks at Billy)
Billy . . . go in there. Storm the outhouse and cut him in two.

Billy looks at Brewer then back out at the unlikely fortress. A VOICE BOOMS forth, muffled and constricted.

BUCKSHOT (O.S.)
You dirty little sonsabitches! I got Chavez, that's a hunert and ten!

Billy cocks his Winchester rifle.

BREWER
I'm darin' you, Billy.

Billy sucks his teeth and looks down the line at Dirty Steve who's emptying his shotgun. Slowly he crawls to a stack of lumber and begins weaving through it, Winchester in one hand, a colt in the other.

IN THE LUMBER

Billy pops his head up to check his location and POW! A blast from the Big Fifty knocks a log in half, inches from his head. He ducks and FIRES and recoils as EIGHT SHOTS ping off the wood around him, knock his hat off and force him to the dirt. He crawls back--

BEHIND THE STONE WALL

where Brewer looks at him questioningly. Billy catches his breath, then turns a look on the foreman.

BILLY
To hell with <u>you</u>. <u>You</u> do it.

Brewer looks back out at Roberts' fortress. And he swallows.

INT. OUTHOUSE

With one boot up on the shitter and the buffalo rifle sticking through an air vent, Old Buckshot KEEPS FIRING AND GRUMBLING. Suddenly a SHOTGUN BLAST blows the wall open and strikes the old man in the gut. He stumbles back against the far wall, closes his eyes for a tight second and GROANS.

And dragging his feet, he's back again--BLASTING away.

BEHIND THE FENCE

Dirty Steve draws back his shotgun, triumphantly. But then a CHARGE makes him duck.

IN THE LUMBER

Brewer is crawling, a pistol in each hand. He takes a seat in the dirt and listens. There is no more shooting. Only DOC'S CRYING is heard in the distance: "my fingers . . . my fingers . . . ."

Brewer gets up behind a thick, rough plank and slowly lifts his head, eyeing the outhouse.

BREWER'S POV:

In the strange white sunlight of the Ruidoso country, sun spots blur the washed-out image of the outhouse, and it appears to be in BLACK AND WHITE. And now, with a HEAVY BANG, the image jars, SPINS, SWINGS TOWARD THE SUN. LIVE SOUND FADES.

REVERSE ON BREWER'S LEGS

hitting the earth and going stiff. LIVE SOUND RESUMES.

DIRTY STEVE (O.S.)
DICK!

BILLY

CURSING, punches the wall.

STEVE

YELLS at the top of his lungs, cocking his gun.

BOWDRE

pulls a boot pistol, stares at the dead foreman in shock.

BUCKSHOT (O.S.)
Ha! Two-hunert and twenty, ya little niggers!

ALL THREE

jump the fence, belly down, and--

THE OUTHOUSE

is pulverized beyond recognition, riddled clear through, dropping splinters, swinging loose boards. THIRTY SHOTS SILENCE the durable old cuss in the shitter.

BEHIND THE FENCE

Doc rises, kerchief wrapped around his disfigured hand. He is pale and shaking. Chavez is pulling himself up, gritting his teeth.

DOC
(stammering)
About ten people ran out the back of the chow room.
You know they're going for Brady.

ACROSS THE FENCE

Bowdre wipes the sweat from his eyes.

CHARLEY
Dick . . . sonuvabitch, Dick! We're coming for ya!

DIRTY STEVE
(breaking)
He's dead, Charley.

CHARLEY
We have to get him!

DIRTY STEVE
You wanna cross in front of that shithouse again?

Silence. And then Charley starts to CRY, dropping his head so no one will see his face.

CHARLEY
What the hell are we gonna do now? Dick's got his head blowed sky off.

Doc steps over the fence holding his wounded hand. He shrugs, shakes his head, can't find any helpful words, then almost buckles when he looks at his severed fingers.

CHARLEY
(continuing)
The man was our foreman. Where the--what we gonna do, Doc?

Doc doesn't know. And time is running out.

BILLY (O.S.)
Regulators!

All eyes flit to--

BILLY

sticking his Colt in his belt and swinging the Winchester up under his arm. He hurries toward the horses.

BILLY
(continuing)
On your mounts! Charley and Dirty Steve, help Chavez into the saddle. We ride. Now.

THE REGULATORS

watch in silence as Billy Bonney walks briskly to his crow-bait pony, pulls out a pouch of tobacco from the saddle and carries it over to Brewer's tall black mare. He sticks his tobacco in the mare's saddle then mounts her.

Charley and Steve hurry to Chavez and help him up. Doc follows, dazed.

THE OUTHOUSE

sits silent. Perforated. A stark picture of the Range War's devastation.

BUCKSHOT
(grumbling)
Slimey sonsabitches . . .

And it is dead quiet again.

EXT. THE VALLEY OF FIRES - WESTERN, NEW MEXICO - DAY

The Regulators ride behind William H. Bonney, high on Dick's black horse. SCORE KICKS IN.

Charley and Doc make eye contact, a dubious glance, considering their new leader and their situation. Dirty Steve keeps shotgun watch while Chavez rides shirtless, a rag tied around his wound. His eyes are closed.

EXT. OLD ANASAZI RUINS

From afar a magnificent ruins, a prehistoric cliff dwelling, towering toward the sky. Layer upon layer of chiseled doorways in the sandstone and shale rock. A fire burns up near one such doorway, a haunting sight.

CLOSER ON RUINS

and The Regulators, now five, sitting around a fire in which Charley forks a slab of snowbird meat. He is still dazed.

Billy sits away from the others, filing at his pistol. Chavez is right up on the fire letting the heat warm his wound. He looks bronze in the firelight. Dirty Steve stares at the cooking snowbird.

Doc leaves the circle and goes to his horse, adjusting the stirrup length.

BILLY
Where to, Doc?

DOC
Going into Roswell if it looks safe. Gotta write Dick's mother in Vermont. Get some clean wraps for this . . .

He raises the rag-tangled, blood-stained mess of a right hand.

BILLY
Don't go near Lincoln. And, uh, bring back some playing cards and some chewing gum. Some cartridges. Number two shot.

Doc looks over at his buddies for a time, then mounts.

DOC
See ya'll.

And he rides slowly down the ruins.

DIRTY STEVE
(to Billy)
Why you filin' off the trigger guard on your Colt?

Billy sets the gun in its holster.

BILLY
With the guard gone, I get an eighth of a second drop on Brady.

Billy draws, FIRES like lightning into the mouth of a dwelling. DOZENS OF BATS fly out, SCREECHING. Charley protects his head.

CHARLEY
Dick said we can't touch the Sheriff. You know that, Billy. Besides, we can't keep this up.

BILLY
Bats sleep all day. The only bird that does that. Weird.

CHAVEZ
We're not going after Brady. No Murphy men. No more. I told you I would find the way, didn't I? Well, the way is West. That's where we go.

BILLY
Woh, woh, woh, hold your horses here, Chavez. What'd ya see, a, uh, a mosquito fly west or somethin' and now that's your way? It ain't our way. It wasn't John's way or he would've run off with his tail between his legs way back. You gotta choose, Chavez. Your way . . . or our way.

Chavez stands up, angry. Red angry. Blood is seeping from his collar wound.

CHAVEZ
Charley? You come with me?

Charley looks up at Chavez, then at Billy, and he seems to be afraid. He looks down at the blackened snowbird.

CHARLEY
Dirty Steve? You ain't sayin' much.

A long pause. Steve just stares into the fire.

BILLY
He's got nothin' to say, Charley. He understands the meaning of the word *pals*.

Charley remains seated, poking at the cooking bird with a stick. After a long moment, Chavez sits back down.

Billy gets up and moves over to Chavez, sitting beside him. He pats the Mexican-Indian on the back then hands him a tin cup of coffee.

EXT. LINCOLN PROPER - NIGHT

And a street torch illuminates Murphy's store. Standing near the front of a bar, Doc leans on his buffalo gun, keeping a watchful eye and turning toward the wall every time PEDESTRIANS pass by. Now his eyes are across the street on--

Wortley's Hotel where FOLKS can be seen eating in the garden area by candlelight. GEORGE WASHINGTON, an old black fiddler, entertains the house.

Several people are leaving, loitering near the adobe exit arch to say goodbye to the MANAGER and leave George Washington a tip. When they step out, we might recognize a few from the fandango--members of The House, dressed handsomely.

District Attorney Pierce steps out and Yen Sun is with him, spectacularly adorned, her hair braided and brushing the back of her knees. Three of the politicians walk away with Lawrence Murphy, and we note that the cattle king has two armed men guarding him closely. When a GUNSHOT goes off somewhere in the distance, he jumps.

Pierce and his concubine climb up into a waiting carriage with three other politicians.

THE CARRIAGE

rolls off down the darkened main road, and no one is aware of the young man in duster and derby, climbing up onto the rear and into the wagon until he sticks his fifty caliber Sharps into Pierce's ribs.

DOC
Hallo, District Attorney, Sir. Hidy, ya'll.

Everyone is stunned motionless for a moment, glaring at the wanted man. One of the men makes a sudden move and Doc wheels on him, aiming the rifle.

DOC
(continuing)
Hallo, Judge Bristol. what ya got in there? A derringer. Damn, you're ugly. Never seen you up close, but <u>you are ugly</u>, Sir.

Bristol, a hog-lipped man of four hundred pounds, smiles bitterly into Doc's face.

BRISTOL
You have the audacity of another man I knew. an English fellow. And look what happened to him. You are a foolish youth, and you're going to see the <u>grave</u> in your youth, Scurlock.

Doc climbs up front with the DRIVER.

DOC
All these corrupt politician-types are gonna be gettin' off at Montano's. And so are you, Friend.

DRIVER
I'm afraid you got so say in the matter, Son.

Doc COCKS HIS RIFLE.

DOC
'Fraid I do.

Yen rolls her eyes nervously.

AT THE NEXT CORNER

the Driver steps down looking around for help, but careful not to rile the highjacker. Pierce takes Yen's arm.

PIERCE]
The lady is coming with us.

Doc aims the gun at Pierce.

DOC
Goodnight, Mr. Pierce.

Pierce releases her arm. Doc pats the front seat and she cautiously climbs up beside him, looking back at Pierce.

BRISTOL
Brady's going to bury you. All of you. And if not him, John Kinney. You're in a war, boy.

DOC
You look very familiar, Judge. You related to the hogs Juan Padrone raises down on the Rio Feliz?

Doc adjusts the grip on the reins, having trouble with his bandaged right hand.

DOC
The carriage will be returned with the young lady. I just want to talk to her.

And with the big rifle trained on the men, Doc rides sideways, guiding the carriage into the darkness.

DOC
Adios.

Yen looks back nervously at her guardian.

EXT. ANASAZI RUINS - NIGHT

It is black up in the ruins; a FULL MOON the only light source. The boys are strewn about on blankets.

CHARLEY
Billy. I seen you do somethin' when you went in after ol' Buckshot.
(a long beat)
I seen ya cross yourself real quick.

BILLY
No you didn't.

CHARLEY
Yes I did.

DIRTY STEVE
You believe in God, Billy?

Another long beat.

BILLY
Well, like I believe in not wearing anything yellow. But one time before a shooting match for a horse--and I wanted that horse very much--I prayed. And I lost the match. So there.

CHAVEZ
God doesn't work like that.

CHARLEY
Well, you got a Zuni god, that's different. Or, do you got a Mexo god? How the hell does that work?

CHAVEZ
One God.

DIRTY STEVE
Bullshit, Chavez. Your kind wants everythin' we got, now ya want our God, too.

BILLY
Don't cuss when ya talk about god, he'll probably set John Kinney down right here in our faces.

CHARLEY
I thought ya didn't believe in no God.

BILLY
I don't. But if you'll take a look, I'm not wearing anything yellow neither.

A beat.

CHARLEY
(stammering)
Doc's been gone all night. I have a feelin' he's gonna run for it.

BILLY
Doc? Nah. Doc likes me.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRUSH LAND OFF THE CARRIAGE ROAD - NIGHT

CLOSE ON:

DOC
I can't stand him.

Yen sits by his side looking out at the mesas ignited by the same crazy moon over The Regulators in the valley. It is a quiet night and they are safely parked.

DOC
It's just that he gets one thing on his mind and ya can't change it. He ain't afraid of nothin'. And that can be dangerous.

YEN
Mr. Jack says you've been chasing me because you want to force me to lay with you. And then cut me into little pieces with a knife.

DOC
Do you believe that, Yen? Do you believe Mr. Jack is a good man?

A silent moment. Yen looks away . . . then at Doc She lowers her eyes.

YEN
In China, girls are not necessary. When we have floods, fathers let the girl babies wash by. Mr. Jack has made me necessary.

DOC
He's made you a slave, Yen. That ain't necessary. Necessary is something you can't do without.

Doc turns sideways in the carriage to face the little girl.

DOC
(continuing)
You're necessary to me, Yen. Cos I feel something for ya. I felt it when we danced, and I felt it when I heard about what they've done to you.

Yen looks at Doc, beginning to trust him, to hear him out. To even like him. The wind moves through his hair and hers, and stirs the horses a bit.

YEN
(nearly breaking)
I am unclean. That's not for a young man.

DOC
Yen, I've killed four men in the last four weeks--not that they didn't need killin'--but death leaves a stink on ya . . . that stays with ya . . . so I ain't spit-shined and monastery white. But if I learned one thing from Mr. John Tunstall, that's that we can change our luck. I'm ready to change mine, Yen.

Yen looks at the first white man to show respect and kindness toward her; younger than The House men, and handsome, he seems to be having an effect on her that contradicts her customs. She looks worried. And after a moment, she bows her head in shame.

YEN
I keep your offering of flowers in a room inside my head. I smell them often. Sometimes you come to the room and ask me to dance.

Doc slowly brings a hand to her chin and lifts her head. He brings his face toward hers--making her small eyes widen--and he touches his lips gently to hers.

DOC
(an explanatory whisper)
Necessary.

YEN
I am honored.

DOC
We can get the train in Roswell and be in New York in four days.

FROM THE BRUSH

THREE HORSEMEN ride up slowly. And they are gruesome. Nomad bounty men wearing Indian buckskins, trapper's skin hats. Goat chaps. Strange mercenary head-hunters of the Old West. Together, they each hit the BREAK ACTION on their rifles.

IN THE CARRIAGE

Doc wheels.

YEN
Who is it?

Doc cracks the horses on.

DOC
Fans of mine, I'm sure.

Doc's stolen horses clump through the chaparral as RIFLE SHOTS rip through the air and around his and Yen's heads.

DOC
(continuing)
Get down, Yen!

Yen lowers her head--chin to neck. Doc pushes her down all the way.

LONG SHOT - THE CHASE - SUNRISE

over rough trails and brush and cottonwood clumps as Doc CRACKS THE WHIP, YELLING, looking over his shoulder. SEVERAL POWDER CHARGES ignite the blackness.

DOC
Yen! Take the reins!

As soon as Yen sits up and feels the leather straps shoved into her tiny hands, Doc swings himself behind her, placing his back against hers. He puts his specs on, then aims his buffalo gun and it is difficult trying to fire without his finger. But he does. BOOOM!

And Yen is taking some wild turns, just missing trees and soaring down bluffs, and her eyes are closed tight. She SCREAMS after each gun blast, a series of short, sharp screams, like a fox kit.

ONE OF THE RIDERS

is hit by Doc's heavy artillery and loses some arm but he stays on, HOWLING, riding low. A SECOND RIDER is spun right out of his saddle.

ON THE CARRIAGE

Doc, in an awkward squat, tries desperately to take straight aim. He CURSES as he continues to miss the wounded scalp hunter who is almost on them. He tries reloading against the hair-pin turns Yen throws them into.

And now the assassin is only a few feet away, dazed but determined, and setting up for a certain point blank shot.

Doc can't get the ball in the gun. Yen emits a STACCATO SCREAM. The scalp hunter cocks back the hammer. And WHAAAM! Doc brings the stock of the big gun up and hits him in the jaw, knocking him off the horse.

But now THREE MORE BOUNTY HUNTERS come into view, FIRING without any consideration for the lady. Doc pivots toward his girl.

DOC
Yen! I want you to keep riding till you come to the first village! Ask them how to get to *La Juarez* at the border! Go there and wait for me! If I don't show up, ask the Mexicans to find a man named Alec Mc--

YEN
(crying)
--no, Doc. I go to Lincoln. To my guardian.

DOC
No, Yen!

A GUNSHOT hits the carriage. Yen SCREAMS. Doc turns. And jumps.

IN THE BRUSH

Doc rolls, getting to one knee and BLASTING. One man goes down. He swings the gun right, and it is uncanny the way he can aim and hit dead-on. He FIRES and a second rider goes down. Now he FIRES NUMBER THREE, and--

THE THIRD RIDER

is missed, but his horse is killed. The horse nosedives and the bounty man sails over his head, sliding through the sand and coming to an unarmed stop only several feet from the buffalo gunner. Doc stares at him and the man looks up, petrified.

DOC
Was it worth it? You thought you were gonna be drinking up a hundred and ten dollars at Wortley's t'night and, instead, look where you are. Vulture-bait.

The man collapses and lies still. Doc glares at him for a moment, then turns, searching for Yen. She is gone. The desert is silent.

DOC
Shit.

Behind him, the grounded bounty man slowly comes to life, reaching for his leg and pulling a long-barrelled pistol from a tied bandanna. Doc wheels, throws up the buffalo with one hand and FIRES. He is hit with the bounty man's blood--a thin spray across the face, his glasses. He looks sick, just standing there for a moment, then slowly wiping it off.

DOC
(again)
Shit.

In a dazed, downtrodden gait, he starts across the sands.

EXT. ANASAZI RUINS - DAY

Doc rides up the steep layers of cliff dwelling, filthy and exhausted and favoring his bandaged hand, soaked red.

Billy is rubbing Sloan's Linament on his horse's legs when he looks up and spots Doc. He grins.

BILLY
Hey, Dirty Steve? Steve?

Steve looks up from where he stands, taking a leak.

BILLY
I told ya--what did I tell ya? About Doc? He's back.

Doc rides up to Billy and hands him a pack of playing cards. Some chewing gum. Cartridges. Billy pats his leg.

BILLY
(continuing)
Regulators! Saddle up, let's ride.

Doc remains on his horse looking down over the valley. Charley, Steve and Chavez , each, mount, GREETING Doc. Billy walks over and picks up his Winchester rifle. He then places his boot pistol down his leg. He checks his duel colts, draws one and loads it. Waxes his holster.

BILLY
(continuing; sing-song nasal)
Sheriff Braaaaa-dy. We're gonna have a lot of fun now.

EXT. LINCOLN PLAZA - DAY

It is a bright spring afternoon down on the main street, and a CROWD is gathered; what seems to be most of the town.

A buckboard is set up before the Sheriff's office, and Brady stands on the make-shift platform sans podium, addressing the townfolk. Standing a few steps from him is DEPUTY SHERIFF DAD PEPPIN. On his other side stand gloomy-faced associates J. HINDMAN and JOHN LONG.

BRADY
(speaking loudly)
There is no word that truthfully describes what is going on here in Lincoln, but "anarchy." We have on our hands a roving pack of weasels--so-called constables--murdering men left and right. I know that some of you--I know a few of you by name--are mistaking this band for honest lawmen. Well, you are wrong.

Brady points a finger into the crowd and prepares to continue his speech. But suddenly a BUZZ SPREADS through the crowd . . . some LAUGHTER . . . A SCREAM OF WARNING . . .

Brady looks puzzled, like a man who doesn't know there's confetti hanging from his hair. Dad Peppin and Hindman look baffled, glance over at the sheriff and go white at the sight of--

BILLY BONNEY

standing on the platform right behind Brady, mocking his politician's gestures.

BILLY
(to the lawmen)
Hi, Girls!

And in a lightning strike, he raises his .41 and shoots Brady in the back of the head before the man can even turn.

As the deputy and his two back-up men draw, a RIFLE SHOT rips apart Hindman's chest and throws him into the SCREAMING CROWD like a raw slab of beef.

ON A ROOF TOP

Doc takes aim again.

ON THE PLATFORM

Peppin, Matthews, and Long dive for cover as the hidden regulators fire on the stage. Matthews catches a throwing knife in the back.

Billy turns and hurries down off the platform as he is FIRED ON, but he seems to remember something and hurries back to Brady, who lies on his back dying.

Billy stoops and claims Brady's rifle--a beauty. Brady looks up at The Kid, glassy-eyed.

BILLY
Reap the whirlwind, Brady.

But a POWDER BALL rips through Billy's thigh, passing clean without scraping the bone.

Billy does a little dance of pain as he lays the rifle barrel to Brady's head. Brady stares up at him, abhorred.

BILLY
(continuing)
Reap it.

He pulls the trigger--POP!--just as we:

CUT TO:

POP! A COLLODION CAMERA going off with a puff of smoke, and--

A TIN-TYPE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE

of William H. Bonney posing with his new rifle. (This is the famous Billy The Kid tin-type, one of two surviving photos.)

ASA BUDBILL,

a small, nervous picture-taker, retracts his head from under a tripod tent and hustles to go about the mad rush of steps required to make a photograph in 1878.

A CROWD looks on, curious, out in front of a saloon in--

FORT SUMNER, NEW MEXICO

where Billy maintains his pose, grinning like a ham at the rest of the boys who look on with the crowd. A name is circulating in HUSHED WHISPERS through the crowd, the street, the saloon. And it is the moniker "Billy The Kid, it's Billy The Kid, it's . . .

EXT. CHISUM'S CAMP - PECOS VALLEY - LATE DAY

CLOSE ON PHOTOGRAPH OF WILLIAM H. BONNEY as it is handed to--

Alex Mcsween by Billy himself. Both men are lit by one of New Mexico's stranger sunsets , which casts a pink light over a cow camp tucked away between green bluffs. A river runs by pitched wagons where several COWPUNCHERS walk about lazily.

In front of one such wagon Mcsween sits by the fire, a blanket wrapped around him and a bad wheeze in his lungs. He hands the photograph back up to Billy, who stands with his boys. The Kid has a purple silk scarf threaded through his thigh wound and hanging.

BILLY
It's for you, Alex.

Alex ignores the photograph. And he looks angry.

MCSWEEN
You weren't supposed to touch Brady. He was the sheriff, for Christ's sake.

The boys stand around the campfire, dirty and tired and gorging themselves with rolls and bacon. Billy limps a few steps.

BILLY
Brady was behind it all. It's a good move for us. Very good.

MCSWEEN
Was it, Billy? Have you read *The Independent*?

All eyes move around to each other, to Mcsween, to Susan coming out from a wagon, pale and tired and carrying water.

MCSWEEN
(continuing)
Governor Axtell's pulled your deputization powers. You're now as wanted by the legitimate law as you are by those outside the law.

The boys look stunned.

MCSWEEN
(continuing)
You're not only being hunted by John Kinney and the Seven Rivers Bunch, you're being hunted by troops. Fort Stanton. The United States.

Mcsween gathers the paper from behind him, offers it in a mess to Billy.

MCSWEEN
(continuing)
Governor's put a two-hundred dollar purse on your head, Billy. They're after you.

Mcsween rises, COUGHING. He turns his back on the boys, shivers against the chill. Susan hands him some medicine and he swigs it.

MCSWEEN
(continuing)
You were supposed to bring eleven men in to jail and help us win this war. Instead, you've gone on a bloody rampage, Richard's been killed. What are you trying to do, Billy?

Billy doesn't answer and Mcsween wheels, angry.

MCSWEEN
(continuing)
Hah!?

SUSAN
Alex! He's hurt.

BILLY
What am I trying to do?

Billy limps around the fire, folding his arms, pondering.

BILLY
I don't know. Maybe I'm trying to get Rutherford B. Hayes to look this way. They're going to let Murphy

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)
and Dolan get away with whatever they want, but they won't let me. I'm gonna keep running through this territory, and I'm gonna keep smoking those bastards to their graves. The more troops they call in, the more forces, the more news stories they write, the more the President's gonna have to look this way, and he's gonna find out what's really going on. Who's really been killing who.

Alex stares across the flame at the kid, just twenty years old. Doc looks into the fire and nods, hearing this for the first time but obviously agreeing. Charley clears his throat.

CHARLEY
What are you gonna do, Alex? Keep hiding?

MCSWEEN
No. I've had it with hiding. My home's still in Lincoln. My business. And I promised John I'd keep the store going no matter what.

DOC
You're not going back to Lincoln.

MCSWEEN
Yes, I am, Doc.

BILLY
Well, we'll have to ride with you.

MCSWEEN
Billy, you'd be certain death to us. To anybody.

BILLY
When are you going to Lincoln?

MCSWEEN
As soon as things settle a bit.

Billy walks up to Mcsween slowly. The attorney looks frightened for a moment.

BILLY
Alex . . . you didn't see what they did to John. I did.

Billy offers the photograph again. Mcsween looks away, his eyes misting.

MCSWEEN
Billy . . .

Billy takes another few steps over to Susan. He offers it to her and she takes it, doing her best to smile.

SUSAN
Thank you, Billy. Please go to Old Mexico. We care about you boys. Please.

Billy looks at her for a time, then turns to the fire. He removes his special deputy's badge from his jacket and drops it in the flame. Dirty Steve follows suit and starts following Billy

downriver, but Susan stops him, touching him on the shoulder. He looks into her eyes nervously.

SUSAN
(continuing)
Please take care of yourself.

And she touches his hat. Dirty Steve lowers his head and continues following Bonney. Chavez removes the badge and drops it in the fire and joins the procession.

Charley takes a while. Then tears the badge off.

CHARLEY
There goes my neck.

And he drops it in the fire. He ambles away, his trousers backsliding.

Doc removes his badge, starts to drop it, then pockets it. Mcsween is up on him, cornering him.

MCSWEEN
Christ, Doc . . . what happened?

DOC
It's a whirlwind all right. Ya get caught inside it, and . . . damn . . .
(clearing a frog in his throat)
Alex? Alex, remember that pretty little China doll at the fandang? The House girl?

Alex nods tentatively.

DOC
(continuing)
Is there any way--as a lawyer--that you can . . . we can . . .

Alex shakes his head.

MCSWEEN
I'm sorry. I don't have enough ground to stand on anymore, Doc. I mean it.

About twenty yards downriver, Billy CRACKS THE BREAK on his Winchester and the sound seems to echo up Mcsween's spine. And perhaps Doc's too. Doc looks after Billy, nods goodbye to Alex and Susan, and follows Billy The Kid downriver, his bandaged right hand hanging tenderly at his side.

EXT. SMALL VILLAGE - NEW MEXICO/MEXICO BORDER - DAY

An adobe archway leads into a small, clean Mexican village where close to TWO HUNDRED VILLAGERS, Mexican-Americans, spill out in the entrance way, a sea of bright color beholding the arrival of Billy The Kid and his tired guns. Slowly, they ride through the arch. Historical date and place fade in:

MAY 10

JUAREZ, NEW MEXICO

Just under MEXICAN TRADITIONAL MUSIC, a CHORUS OF CHANTS rises up from the people.

VILLAGERS
El Chi-va-to! El Chi-va-to! El Chi-va-to!

Billy rides in, scanning dark faces, considering the near deification. And now with the Mexican chant for "The Kid" ringing in his ears, he looks like he may be taking this very seriously.

VILLAGERS
El Chi-va-to!

MEXICAN MAN
You are hero! You are for the people! For New Mexico.

Billy looks down at the man, then throws an arm high in the air, clutching Brady's rifle. the VILLAGERS ROAR. Everyone reaches for him, trying to touch him; old women bless him.

The other boys ride behind him, amazed.

HOURS LATER - IN THE VILLAGE - NIGHT

A fire burns high. CHILDREN run about with the GOATS. Chavez throws knives for the people, smiling at the APPLAUSE.

Charley sits alone with MANUELA, a pretty villager. He speaks shyly, and she clings to every word.

INT. AN ADOBE HUT

Billy sits in a bathtub, soaking his wound, smoking a big cigar. He is dictating a letter to Doc, who sits by a candle near the door writing with quill on letter paper.

BILLY
Dear Governor Axtell. I have heard that you will give two hundred dollars for my body. Perhaps we should meet and talk, some safe place like the house of Old Squire Wilson. Send your men to escort me. I am at the Juarez Village. Send three and instruct them not to shoot, as I am unarmed.
(draws on his cigar)
I will meet you at Wilson's house and discuss any arrangements to make things easier. That is--perhaps arrangements can be made to call dogs off one A. A. Mcsween. In short, sir, I surrender. Your obedient servant, William H. Bonney.

Doc casts an eye up, surprised. He writes it down.

BILLY
P.S. I have changed my mind. Kiss my ass.

Doc smiles and shakes his head, finishing the letter.

Suddenly the door bangs open, Dirty Steve nearly falls in, breathless. Billy has a pistol on him.

DIRTY STEVE
John Kinney.

Billy flies out of the tub. Doc leaps to his feet, runs out the door.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

Chaos. Villagers run about SCREAMING as JOHN KINNEY and his DONA ANA BUNCH ride in, rifles high. Kinney is a brutal-looking outlaw with long black hair that rides his shoulders, and a beard that unfolds to his navel. He is a rail-thin man, with pock-marked face and bad front teeth. His men--forty of them--aren't any friendlier looking.

The OLD MAN OF THE VILLAGE walks up to Kinney, who nearly tramples him with his massive sorrel.

KINNEY
We know they're here, Old Man. Invite us to the fiesta. Where are they?

OLD MAN
El Chivato. He was here. No more. To Old Mexico, he go. Far away.

KINNEY
Yeah? You feed 'em?

The Old Man shakes his head no. Kinney motions toward the huts and his boys ride forward at an aggressive pace. When Kinney rides past, the Old Man looks up toward--

THE ADOBE ARCH

where The Regulators sit on their horses, motionless. Not even breathing.

THE OLD MAN

touches his hat and--

THE REGULATORS

race down the sloping arch and out toward freedom. Doc waves goodbye to the silent crowd.

IN THE VILLAGE

Kinney comes from a hut and does a take, getting an idea of what just went down. He SHOUTS to his men, rides up to the Old Man who is walking quickly toward his hut.

The Dona Ana Bunch THUNDERS PAST the Old Man toward the arch, FIRING their rifles, trying to catch The KID. Kinney stops his horse short so as to eye the Old Man of the village.

KINNEY
(tense)
Old Man . . . . you may have cost me six hundred dollars. I'm gonna . . .
(begins to quake, to sweat like he's got goddamned malaria or something)
--I'm gonna kill you. Then I'm gonna kill El Chivato. Then I am coming back to shove this--
(re: pistol)
--up your daughter's ass.

He shoots the Old Man dead.

EXT. ALBUQUERQUE - DAYS LATER

An HERMAPHRODITE--an intricate compromise of man, woman, thing. And it is standing on a small wood pedestal wearing a silk kimono.

Slowly it opens the kimono and reveals a strange blend of flesh. PULL BACK ON--

A CROWD gathering at the side of the road to see the exhibit. Most SCREAM. Others LAUGH. Billy The Kid just grins simply, studying the person. Dirty Steve approaches him.

DIRTY STEVE
Hey, Billy. You'd better--
(he looks at the exhibit)
--what in the <u>hell</u> is that?

A SHOWMAN steps up on the platform with his thing.

SHOWMAN
That, son, is man. It is woman. It is the wonder known as morphrodite.

BILLY
What ya want, Stevens?

DIRTY STEVE
Charley. You better come see him.

Billy looks over his shoulder toward the row of shops.

EXT. ALLEY - BETWEEN SALOON AND BLACKSMITH SHOP - DAY

Charley sits on a fence post, trembling. Sweating. Billy, Steve, Doc, and Chavez stand around him.

CHARLEY
(stammering)
I read, Billy. I read it.

DOC
He just read about the party that new Sheriff Peppin plans to give us.

BILLY
Party? You mean The Hangin'?

CHAVEZ
Shhh.

CHARLEY
(starting to break)
Damn, Billy, you ever see a man hanged? His face goes flat purple an' his eyes come up on him.

BILLY
Yep. Seen Red Smitty's head come right off. What a sight that--

DOC
--Billy, Charley don't wanna hear about Red Smitty. He wants to hear you say we're not gonna hang.

CHARLEY
Ya mess your trousers, they say. Gals watchin' and everythin'.

BILLY
If we get caught, we're gonna hang, Charley. But there's many a slip twixt the cup and the lip.

Billy grins at Doc in self-approval.

CHARLEY
We gotta do somethin' before they catch us. You gotta let me do somethin'.

Billy looks down at Charley, patiently.

EXT. ADOBE WHOREHOUSE - FORT SUMNER, NEW MEXICO - DAY

The Regulators ride up to the ramshackle home set beside Keller's Saloon. They stare at the place.

DIRTY STEVE
Damn, Charley, that's your last wish? To get your carrot whet? Could'a done that back in Albuquerque.

DOC
There's such a thing as special women, Dirt Face. someday you'll find that out.

BILLY
Throw in your money for Bowdre. Charley, we'll be hidin' out in the saloon. Don't take too long.

Charley collects the coins and pockets them, nodding sheepishly. The others begin hitching their mounts to a street rail.

INT. BROTHEL ROOM

MALLORY, an attractive but worn whore, pushing forty, sits in the corner of the room on a chair at a makeup table. She draws on a thin black cigarette, her bloodshot eyes taking in the form of the young man standing before her, hat in hand. Charley sniffs at the opium-fogged air.

MALLORY
What's your name?

CHARLEY
Charley.

MALLORY
Well, Charley. I don't remember you, but I guess you remember me. Ya know, I meet so many young men out for the first. You know how it is.

CHARLEY
Sure.

Mallory puts her cigarette out and lifts a knee dantily, beginning to strip off a stocking. Her eyes smile on Charley.

CHARLEY
(continuing)
Just wanna hold you, ma'am.

Mallory goes still. Then pulls the stocking back up. She sits back and studies him.

MALLORY
Whatever your pleasure, Charley. But it all costs the same.

Charley walks over to the bed, sits. Mallory sits beside him, looking him sweetly in the face. He lowers his head.

INT. KELLER'S SALOON - DAY

A BANJO MAN picks grass from a corner chair while PATRONS drink booze and play monte and stare vacantly through THICK SMOKE at the huge painting of Fatima, the pot-bellied dance-house pigeon.

At a back table, Billy, Doc, Dirty Steve and Chavez play monte while they wait for Charley to come down from the brothel. The boys have been knocking back a few and they're full of LAUGHTER and TALK.

INT. FORT SUMNER BROTHEL - DAY

Charley is sitting on the bed beside Mallory who is hugging him.

MALLORY
Maybe next time, Charley Boy. Maybe you'll--

CHARLEY
--I'm goin' to the gallows, Ma'am.

Mallory stops rocking the young man for a moment, considers the announcement, then rocks again.

MALLORY
You're so young . . .

CHARLEY
That don't matter.

MALLORY
Okay, Charley. I'm holdin' you . . . I'm lovin' you.

Tears run thin down charley's wind-burned cheek.

INT. KELLER'S SALOON

"TEXAS" JOE GRANT, forty, stands up at the bar, a boot planted on the rail, a hand wrapped around a glass of bourbon. He is a tawny, blue-eyed man, well-groomed, and proud of the awesome Colt Peacemaker with pearl handle glinting at his right hip.

GRANT
When I cover this much ground, you better bet your last dollar that I'll get the job done. If Billy The Kid is in town, he's as good as in the grave, and I'm tellin' ya'll plain as day.

The BARTENDER fills his glass again while Billy mosies up to the bar, takes a stand beside the gunman.

BILLY
Hallo there.

GRANT
I were you, Son, I'd be out of the way.

BILLY
You really gonna shoot Billy The Kid?

GRANT
Is the sun gonna rise tomorrow?

Billy GIGGLES, studies the man's fancy garb.

BILLY
That the gun you gonna kill him with?

Grant ignores the punk.

GRANT
Barkeep? Another glass of tonsil varnish here.

BILLY
Can I touch it?

The Barkeep frowns, turns away.

INT. FORT SUMNER BROTHEL

Charley looks warm in Mallory's arms.

MALLORY
Your time is up, Charley. Do you feel better?

Charley nods, takes a manly breath. He pays Mallory five dollars in gold and fixes his gunbelt before a mirror.

MALLORY
(continuing)
Charley. Man I married, his name was Charley, too.

CHARLEY
I thank you for your kindness, Ma'am. Now I gotta go hang.

Mallory's tired eyes follow him to the door. She's beginning to look troubled.

MALLORY
Boy? How do you know me? Who are you?

Charley stops at the door, barely turns toward her. He is having trouble coming out with it, getting his tongue around the words.

CHARLEY
I'm Billy The Kid.

Mallory tilts her head quizzically, brings a cuticle to her teeth.

MALLORY
My God . . .

And Charley walks out, opening the door and letting in a dust-flecked path of light that makes Mallory look like a skeleton.

INT. KELLER'S SALOON

Grant SNORTS, eyes the sniveling kid.

BILLY
(continuing)
I admire you, Sir. And if I can touch the gun that's gonna kill Billy The Kid . . . aw . . .

Grant draws the gun, twirls it--everybody jumps. He then teases the young man's hands with it.

GRANT
You know iron?

Billy nods. Grant places it in his palm.

GRANT
(continuing)
Take a look at her, then pass it back. That gun killed Ed Rollins.

Billy looks at the gun, turns it over in his small hands.

GRANT
(continuing)
Barkeep! A round of white mule for every lady in the house.

Billy quickly and carefully opens the chamber of the gun to check out the mechanics. He rolls the chamber, examines two empty cartridges.

GRANT
(continuing)
Pass her back, Son. You stoke another man's gun like that you might as well be strokin' his woman. Pass her up.

Billy hands the gun back, grinning simply.

GRANT
(continuing)
Okay. Out of the way 'fore ya get hurt.

BILLY
One more question?

GRANT
No.

BILLY
I'm leavin' now, and I'd like to know what to look for in case I see him, so I can tell ya.

Grant stares hard at Billy, then looks away toward SOME WOMEN who GIGGLE gratefully over the purchased drinks. Grant turns back to Billy, his eyes shimmering with liquor.

GRANT
Good-lookin' kid, way with women. Dresses like a dandy and he's a left-hander. They also say he's fond of whistlin' sad ballads.
(he drinks)
Now you go out in the street, and if you see anybody comin' who fits that bill, you come whisperin' to me.

BILLY
Okay.

GRANT
Goodbye.

BILLY
I see him.

Grant cocks a brow. Looks over his shoulder where the kid may have spotted someone in the mirror.

BILLY
(pointing to mirror)
Right there. See him?

Grant squints in the mirror, figures it out.

GRANT
That so now? Boy . . . I don't have time for your wise lip. Go take a walk 'fore I drop your britches in front of all these ladies and spank your ass blue.

Billy stares at him in the eye, and then, slowly, gradually, puckers his lips and begins WHISTLING "Silver Threads Among the Gold." Grant grows increasingly put off.

GRANT
You're a testy little cus, ain't--

But Grant is quickly aware of the Bartender clearing out, moving as many bottles as he can; patrons leave the bar; and all the while, Billy keeps whistling off-key, his pucker bowed in a wise-acre smirk.

It all registers. Grant draws his fancy Colt, and has it point blank at The Kid's forehead. CLICK. AGAIN. CLICK. And in the light speed moment between clicks, Billy Bonney raises his pistol and FIRES into Joe Grant's throat. Charley has just entered the bar and he jumps a foot.

Grant is slammed into the wall. He drops. SILENCE falls over the smoke-filled room.

BILLY
What's that make, Doc? twenty-five?

Sitting at the table, Doc raises five fingers on one hand and two on the other to indicate seven dead men. Billy scoffs.

BILLY
That's horseshit.

He turns and picks up a glass of white mule, sips it. Every soul in the room is frozen stiff, eyes on Billy. The Kid turns a look on the Bartender.

BILLY
(continuing)
Call it ten even.

The Bartender nods in instant agreement and the BANJO MAN begins a wild number. CHEERS and HOOTS and LAUGHTER break the tension.

NEAR THE DOOR

Charley slowly relaxes, letting the wall support him as he leans back SIGHING deeply with loose horse lips.

EXT. CARRIAGE ROAD TO LINCOLN - DAY

Billy, on his mare, leads The Regulators onward.

DIRTY STEVE
Like Doc says, a special woman, hmm? You get that ol' carrot whet? The silver sword polished? She go for it, Charley? Who was she anyway?

A beat.

CHARLEY
My mother.

Steve flinches, looks away. Keeps riding. And no one presses it further.

DOWN THE ROAD

just behind a wagon loaded with bags of flour, John Kinney and the dona Ana Bunch sit on their mounts in dead silence.

A SALESMAN, fussing with the load of flour, looks at Kinney and nods once.

KINNEY
Massacre the bastards.

UP THE ROAD

The Regulators ride forth until Chavez stops his horse. The others stop. Turn to face the knifeman. Chavez seems to be scanning some supernatural terror on the skyline.

POV:

Kinney and the bunch stampeding forward, and there are so many of them squeezed together--a virtual army--that they can't all fit in the wide dirt road.

REVERSE ON THE REGULATORS

taking this in. Badly.

CHARLEY
Oh shit.

And they throw their mounts around, racing back toward Keller's saloon and the brothel.

SCORE INTERLUDE - THE CHASE

and Kinney and The Bunch are riding for the kill, professional depopulators with pride on the line. They are getting closer to the five young guns who leave Fort Sumner behind and take to the open sands.

BETWEEN MESAS AND BUTTES

the hunters and the hunted weave and hurdle . . .

UP AND THROUGH PUEBLO RUINS

The chase narrows, and Kinney's boys are FIRING, ducking RETURN FIRE. Kinney himself, takes aim with a long rifle and BLASTS on the run, black chaw running down his chin.

The Regulators are sweat-soaked, filthy, pushing their tired horses on. But then comes a sight that stops them all dead.

ACRES OF MESQUITE JUNGLE

thick and nasty switch trees; thousands of them, each bearing thousands of jagged thorns. PANNING THE DISTANCE of this jungle, we see that there is also coma--trees with dirk-like thorns three inches long; cat's claw, Spanish dagger, prickly pear, Devil's head--all the worst flesh-tearing thorns and limbs in the Southwest growing in one spread, as far as the eye can see.

THE REGULATORS

scan the impenetrable devil's bed while only a hundred yards to their backs, Kinney and his men close in, FIRING. WHOOPING.

CHAVEZ
(Mexican word for this jungle)
Brasada.

Chavez lies out over his saddle, slinks low to the side of his horse.

CHAVEZ
Stay low like the horse and run her as fast as she'll go.
Let her take you. It's going to hurt.

DIRTY STEVE
(looking over his shoulder)
Who the hell cares, let's go!!

Chavez slaps his horse's flank and he is rocketed into the brasada at top speed. Behind is Steve, riding Indian style, and Charley trying the same--his butt way up high--while doc and Billy torpedo in last, instantly losing their hats.

POV - ROCKETING THROUGH BRASADA

or "popping brush," the Mexican and more serious cowpuncher's technique for getting through the cat's claw jungle that can eat a man and his horse.

CAMERA MOVES HEADLONG into Spanish dagger, SWERVES out of the way of a thorned Mesquite limb--the boys are HOWLING.

KINNEY AND THE BUNCH

smash into the brasada without a pause, and they make the mistake of riding high--no Indians among them--and getting the sudden surprise of a million dirk-thorns clawing into their legs and arms and shoulders. Their horses buck, throw a few men, but Kinney keeps on, gritting his teeth, aiming his long rifle with one hand, BLASTING.

THE REGULATORS

HOWLING . . . running a race with thorns as handicaps and every step a hurdle . . . HOWLING . . . .and Steve's horse goes cold-jawed, tricked by the maze, throws him. He goes down, six or seven Spanish dagger going through him. Charley grabs his

arm, yanks him up, he makes it on Doc's horse, watching his own mount run crazy someplace else.

And forty men fight brasada, following, SHOOTING.

WHERE THE BRASADA ENDS

foothills begin, and Chavez emerges with only one long scratch down his arm. Billy pops out next in another place, his cheeks scratched, jacket frazzled. Charley smashes out, bloodied, the seat of his pants ripped right off.

And no one waits around to see if Doc makes it out but he does, Dirty Steve hugging him, holding on, and both men still HOWLING. They storm up in the hills and vanish.

IN THE BRASADA

Kinney and The Bunch struggle forward, CURSING and ARGUING and restraining cold-jawed mounts.

Kinney looks out toward the rising bluffs and contorts his pockmarked face. When he parts his lips, chaw spills from those bad teeth.

KINNEY
I'm on you, Bonney! I'm on you!

And he fights forward, a thorn-dagger piercing his shoulder. He tears himself free, his black eyes fixed crazily on the distance, long rifle held high and smoking.

EXT. HOT SPRINGS - OJO CALIENTE - DAY

STEAM rolls ponderously off of several hot pools. MOVING THROUGH the steam, we find charley on his knees, his trousers down around his boots and his bottom in the air, bearing three mesquite thorns. Chavez is trying to remove them.

MOVING across one pool to another, we find Billy sitting on a rock, soaking his feet in the springs and reading a yellow-covered dime novel.

There is an exaggerated drawing of a handsome bandit on the cover, riding a stallion, a senorita on the back. *AUTHENTICATED ADVENTURES OF BILLY THE KID*, the title reads, "*Noted desperado and lover whose daring deeds are known throughout the Southwest.*"

Billy alternates between grinning and frowning as he reads. Two pair of legs and boots move up stealthily behind him and stop.

DOC
Billy.

BILLY
(re: novel)
His hat was covered with gold and jewels, it sparkled and shone in a dazzling and blinding manner when one looked upon it. The shoes worn by this young prince of the plains were low-quartered with patent silver spurs in the heels. His undergarments were of fine scarlet broadcloth and—

DOC

Kid.

Billy turns to look at Doc and Dirty Steve. He holds up the "penny dreadful" to display the elaborate drawing.

BILLY

I wonder if I should start dressing like this . . . ? Ya know? To keep up the what-do-ya-call-it? The, uh . . .

DOC

Billy, we been figurin' our course, and it looks like we've just gone in one, big, circle. Twice.

BILLY

And?

DOC

And? And now it looks like we're headin' back toward Lincoln. I'm sure we're not going into Lincoln, but--

BILLY

--we are.

A beat. Doc turns away, throwing up his hands.

DOC

Christ in heaven.

DIRTY STEVE

Ain't a good idea, Billy.

Charley ambles up to help, gingerly buttoning his trousers.

CHARLEY

Yeah, Billy. We're lucky to still be alive. Goin' back to Lincoln is--

BILLY

--Lincoln is where we'll find the rest of the men who killed John . . . and we're goin' to bury them. Then we're going to bury Murphy

Doc wheels to face The Kid, and he dashes his derby to the earth.

DOC

It's two hundred against five!

BILLY

(mimicking)

It's two-hunered against five!!

(putting his boots on)

We take Murphy and The Ring falls. We take him . . . we win. Simple as pie.

DIRTY STEVE

Can't get to him, Billy.

CHAVEZ
It's not just two hundred men. There's bounty hunters, too— everywhere we go. but not West.

BILLY
Oh, here we go . . .

CHAVEZ
I chose our way, Chivato. But now I see our way is your way, and I don't trust it anymore.

Throughout this speech, Billy bobs his head loosely like a sarcastic, defiant child.

CHAVEZ
California is where we have to go.

CHARLEY
Dang on the money, Chavez, I believe in that Spirit World stuff— let's go. California sounds good to me—

BILLY
—you're all scared.

Silence. Billy rises, brushing off his knees. He sticks the dime novel in his back pocket, and for a time there is no sound but the WIND BANSHEEING in a gorge.

BILLY
(continuing)
You're all gonna fail the test.

DOC
What test?

BILLY
Everyday you have to test yourself, see how good you are, see if you can make it. That is--outta the fire. Once you stop testin' yourself, ya get slow. And they kill ya.

Billy looks from face to face and looks sad.

BILLY
(continuing)
You fellas don't feel that? Like when Kinney's right up on our ass and the balls are flyin' and the blood goes right to your head, and it's like--

Here, he draws over his shoulder--a skillful trick--dropping to a knee and BLASTING SIX SHOTS behind him--and then the "killer shift" throwing rifle and pistol from hand to hand. FIRING.BLASTING.

BILLY
(continuing)
Woo! Right outta the fire!

He border rolls the gun, holsters it.

BILLY
(continuing)
It's really . . . it's quite a--quite a sensation.

Doc stares blankly at him.

DOC
I'm sure it is. I'm sure that in your mind, trumpets sound and the angels sing a fargin' hymn. but I shit my unions, Billy, okay? We've taken enough Murphy scalps. We can't end the range wars, just us. You wanna get the president's attention, go ahead. You wanna keep testin' yourself? fine. But me, Billy? I am riding to the border where I am getting a hot meal, a bath, a good sleep . . . and come mornin', I am a Mexican. Hasta luego.

Doc turns, picks his derby up from the sand and walks toward his horse.

CHARLEY
Me, too, Billy.

And Charley backs away, nervously, eventually turning and moving double-quick toward his mount. Dirty Steve follows him. And after a moment, Chavez nods to Billy and goes with the others.

And then the sound; the sound that they must all be praying won't break the silence but does. And it is the METALLIC CLICK of a well-oiled, warm colt pistol chamber, spinning and locking. they all stop dead at their horses.

Again, the WIND MOANS in the valley. But The Kid is aiming out at nothing just a habit.

BILLY
Mexico. Ah, see. You fellas are testin' yourselves and you don't even know you're testin' yourselves. Tryin' to make it to Old Mexico.

Billy starts to LAUGH and slowly the boys turn around, baffled.

BILLY
(continuing)
They'll be coverin' every possible which way in from Texas to Arizona. Kinney knows everybody down along the border; we got a full day through them thorns we all love so much. Which is good hidin' for scalp hunters and renegade Indians, incidently.

And now the young Regulators look troubled. Billy pulls his boots on over bare feet.

BILLY
(continuing)
The chances of makin' Old Mexico, well, hell . . . that's the test of all tests, ya ask me.

He tucks in his shirt, ,picks up his hat, blows some dust off it, and GIGGLES. He puts his hat on, tips it just right. And grins.

BILLY
I'm in.

And nobody else moves but William H. Bonney, walking briskly toward his black mare.

EXT. MEXICAN VILLAGE/JUAREZ - AT THE BORDER - LATE DAY

A MEXICAN WOMAN of middle age is carrying two heavy buckets of water through the adobe arch into the village. The sound of HORSES causes her to turn her neck stiffly and squint into the distance. Her craggy, tired face opens under a wide grin.

MEXICAN WOMAN
(a sacrosanct whisper)
El Chivato.

CUT TO:

A GATHERING

of villagers, swarming the young riders as they enter through the arch. Flowers are being thrown, SONGS SUNG and the CHANT "El Chi-va-to!" thunders in the village.

billy raises an arm, throws a kiss, then LAUGHS wildly at his own hammy actions. The other boys look relieved, LAUGHING and reaching down to touch hands with the villagers.

INT. VILLAGE HUT - NIGHT

Charley Bowdre sits at a dining table with Manuela, her mother and grandmother, eating a hot meal. The older ladies are not eating at all. Just sitting and looking back and forth between their child and the young desperado.

CHARLEY
It's all over, Manuela. When the sun comes up--WOO! Yoo-hoo!.

The older ladies jump slightly.

CHARLEY
(continuing)
We go to Mexico. No more trouble. No mas tipico. We go in <u>peace</u>.

Manuela smiles, pleased. Her mother and grandmother WHISPER and nod positively.

CHARLEY
(continuing)
Manuela? I'd like you to go with me. Just you and me.

Manuela looks hopefully to her mother. The old women confer.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

Dirty Steve sits with Chavez at a fire. In the background, the villagers prepare a pig on a spit.

DIRTY STEVE
Before that ol' nigra died, Chavez, he looked up at me--half gone--and he said, "Gonna come a day." I reckon this is the day he was talkin about. The day when I get so scared a'death that I "revalize" that no killin's good killin'. I used to fancy myself ridin' with Jesse James. Right now, I just wanna take up on a beanfield and chase poon-ta nights. I ain't even been able to get it stiff with all this worryin' about gettin' it shot off.

Chavez smiles, reaches across the fire, and Dirty Steve looks confused. Chavez is offering him his hand.

DIRTY STEVE
(continuing)
Now, hold it, Chavez. This don't mean I'm about to rub carrots with no Mexican Zuni.

Chavez stares at him in disbelief. But Steve smiles and takes his hand, gripping it tight. His smile fades away quickly.

DIRTY STEVE
(continuing)
Been damn good ridin' with ya.

CHAVEZ
Many nights . . . I put a blade to your neck while you were sleeping. I'm glad I never killed you, Steve. You're all right.

Dirty Steve does a hard take and slowly brings a hand to his throat to touch the skin lightly. Chavez smiles.

AT THE EDGE OF THE VILLAGE

almost literally on the border, Billy lies on his back in the sand. A MEXICAN GIRL, twenty-three or so, sits near him, staring at him with great caution.

BILLY
Nah. This ain't . . .
(a long, long beat)
This just ain't right.

He fingers his front pocket, pulls out a big cigar. Lights it. The girl, sitting in the sand a safe distance away, fans her hand in front of her nose; a comment about the cigar.

BILLY
(continuing)
I know what's back there. That is--New Mexico. I

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)
know the saloons, the doctors. The caverns. The rivers. Every nook and cranny. I don't know what's on the other side.
(he smokes)
And besides, it's my country. I'm on the front page of the newspapers just as much as Rutherford B. Hayes. I'm just as famous.

There is a long silence as Billy smokes the cigar and the girl fans her nose.

BILLY
(continuing)
Rutherford wouldn't even be able to get a good table at a cafe in Old Mexico. And neither will I.

Billy suddenly draws, aims at a man in the shadows. But it is only Doc eating a piece of pork.

DOC
Don't shoot, Billy. I just wanna invite ya'll to a weddin'.

BILLY
When?

DOC
Now.
(he smiles)
Charley's got a wife.

Billy border rolls the gun and holsters it. He looks out toward the fires, the celebration.

CUT TO:

AN INCREDIBLE FIESTA

alive with MUSIC, dancing, roasting pigs, wine and tequila.

Charley walks through the party with his bride on his arm, colorful flowers implanted in his shock of dusty hair, which is stuffed under a sombrero.

The Regulators share wide grins, flanking him and CLAPPING hands in a steady tempo. Mother and grandmother follow only with their eyes now.

A PINATA

is smashed open, hundreds of trinkets and candies flying through the air.

BILLY

walks alone, away from the celebration, a bottle of tequila in his hand. He passes by a small, ramshackle barn and stops at the sight of a little animal staring at him.

A goat, small and white, new horns budding. It walks up to Billy, looks into his face with wide alert eyes.

Billy returns the stare and slowly drops to one knee. He calls the goat nearby, pretending he has something in his hand. He scratches in the dirt, makes a "TSK, TSK" sound. The goat takes a step forward. But a shadow falls over the goat. The shadow of someone big. The little kid runs away and Billy draws, wheeling on a knee.

Pat Garret stands over him, dressed for long travel in hot weather. Well-heeled. His hair has grown out a bit. His mustache is thicker. He tenses at the sight of the pistol.

In the background, Garret's horse and mule loiter, hitched to a tree.

BILLY
Juan Largo.

GARRET
That's right.

BILLY
(smiles, proud of his memory)
But your real name is Garret. Pat.

Garret smiles, and we note that his eyes are glassy, heavy, like one who has been imbibing heavily, or maybe taking sylvarium for the ol' Snake City syphilis.

GARRET
Good. Quick boy.

BILLY
(smiling, continuing)
Uh, sheep, cattle and whore thief.

GARRET
Now, that's not a very civilized thing to say, Billy.

BILLY
What are you doing here? No one's supposed to come in here.

GARRET
Goin' back to Lous'iana for family business. Wanted to see the boy whose become such a sensation since we met. These Mexicans will let anyone in who brings a gift.

BILLY
Well, how'd you know I was here?

GARRET
I'm a tracker. Gonna be hell as sheriff, if they elect me.

BILLY
Wait a minute, what are you sayin'? I don't--

GARRET
--the officials have asked me to run.

BILLY
Then I'm askin' you to run, too.

Billy climbs to his feet, points north with his pistol.

BILLY
(continuing)
That way.

Billy then pans the awesome revolver to Garret's face, thumbs back the hammer with a nasty click.

BILLY
(continuing)
Or I'll take your shittin' scalp like I did Brady's.

GARRET
Billy, I ain't the law yet. And I ain't here to get your ass hairs up. Truth is, I come from a family of small farmers, so I'm one of them secretly sayin' "Amen" as I read about your, uh . . .

BILLY

Mission--

GARRET

--mission.

Billy sets the hammer back, holsters his piece.

GARRET
(continuing)
No, I ain't here to push you none, Billy. I'm here to tell ya some bad news about a friend we share.

Billy throws a quick look at Garret, on edge.

GARRET
(continuing)
Mcsween. Tunstall's lawyer.

BILLY
What about Alex?

GARRET
He's gonna die. Tomorrow. He and his wife. At his house.

Billy's eyes narrow.

GARRET
(continuing)
Murphy and Dolan know he's coming back to Lincoln tomorrow. They're gonna wait till he's home, then go pay a visit.

Billy just stares at Garret, deeply upset by this information.

GARRET
(continuing)
Alex has been good to me. If I wasn't depending on the support of The Ring for my future, I'd round up some help myself.
(looking out at the celebration)
Who's gettin' married?

BILLY
What time are they expectin' him?

GARRET
Supper time. I figure you're the only fella with the pluck to get up a bunch of Mcsween partisans and go give the man and his wife a rightful escort across the border.

Billy looks out at the celebration. Charley is spinning his wife in a circle of villagers.

Garret is looking at Billy's bottle. The Kid hands it up to him without a word. Garret takes an effortless pull off it and hands it back to the young man.

GARRET
(continuing)
Ain't been in Lou'siana for quite a spell. I'll see ya, Billy.

Garret waits for Billy Bonney to say goodbye, but he doesn't. Not until Garret has taken several long-legged strides toward the arch out.

BILLY
Garret?

The big man turns slightly.

BILLY
(continuing)
Are you my friend, or what?

Billy looks tired, a little drunk, a little confused by this sudden load of information.

GARRET
Yes, I am, Bill.

Billy nods and watches Garret continue walking toward his horse and mule.

BILLY
Hey. Why don't you ride with us, Juan Largo? You'll go to heaven.

GARRET
(as he walks)
Just goin' to Lous'iana is chore enough. G'night, Kid. Congratulate the married man for me.

Billy takes a drink and looks out at his celebrating boys. Behind him, Garret stops walking . . . and like a big cat, he turns.

Garret stares at Billy The Kid's back, a slight, youthful target. He slowly lowers a hand--a trembling hand--to his revolver. Touches it . . . gets a grip. And then notices--

A LITTLE VILLAGE CHILD, a young boy with deer-like brown eyes gazing at him in silence. Watching.

Garret smiles wanly at the Mexican boy and turns, walking on.

IN THE DANCING CIRCLE

Charley swings Manuela, releases her, does a silly dance on his own to the drunken GUFFAWS of Dirty Steve and Chavez and the Mexican-American men.

Suddenly a GUNSHOT goes off in the distance and MUSIC STOPS. The dancing comes to an end. Diffident eyes look out toward--

THE ARCH

where Billy stands, barefoot, pistol in hand, alongside his leg. He has fired a shot to get attention.

BILLY
Regulators.

IN THE CIRCLE

Charley just stares vacantly as if perhaps a beautiful dream has just merged with jarring nightmare.

INT. ADOBE HUT

Doc, sitting alone, depressed, reading David Copperfield, looks up at the sound of Billy's voice from afar, shouting that word. That word that once had some kind of meaning.

EXT. IN THE VILLAGE

The people swarm the young men, who are high on horseback loading their firearms and accepting full canteens and wrapped meat from their friends.

Billy rides up beside Charley who looks lost, a tightness at his throat.

MANUELA CRIES at her mother's arm.

BILLY
Charley.
(Bowdre is numb)
Charley.

Charley looks over.

BILLY
(continuing)
Maybe you should stay. Ya can't shoot worth a damn anyway. And this gal's really cryin'. She's givin' me a headache.

Charley's eyes clear for a moment, then eclipse again.

DOC
Go ahead, Charley. Ya got a wife.

Charley looks down at the crying Manuela. Then at Chavez, who is offering a hand. Charley grips it in what does not resemble a standard handshake at all. But it is a firm grasp; a heartfelt one. Everyone waits for Charley to get down off his horse, but the chubby Regulator only lowers his eyes.

CHARLEY
It ain't easy havin' pals.

Billy looks at him, amused. Then at the villagers.

BILLY
Adios. Chavez? Do your little . . .

Chavez begins a LONG SPANISH GOODBYE, thanking the villagers for their hospitality.

Billy's foot kicks horseflesh and Brewer's old mare takes him forward, the boys behind him. Charley takes one last, long look at Manuela and is gone.

EXT. LINCOLN PROPER - NEXT DAY - SUNSET

Mcsween's house, a tall wood and adobe structure set back a dozen yards from the road and bordered--from the rear--by a short but sturdy wall.

The street is quiet today and the FEW PEDESTRIANS out walking hardly take note of the five young gunmen riding in briskly and taking their horses around behind the Mcsween house.

Historical date fades in:

JULY 14, 1878

A DOG BARKS somewhere.

INT. MCSWEEN HOUSE - A MOMENT LATER

Mcsween sits behind a small desk on which stands a kerosene lantern and a stack of records and paperwork. He is wearing small round specs like Doc's, and he is even more haggard-looking than when we last found him along the river.

MCSWEEN
I am not leaving my house.

Billy stands before him, hat in hand. Doc is just behind him. Charley and Steve and Chavez stand back aways with Susan.

BILLY
Word is out, Alex. They're coming here to kill you.
Any time now.

Alex stares at Billy, digesting the news. He removes his eye glasses and looks over at Susan.

BILLY
(continuing)
We wanna lead you into Old Mexico. Help ya. When it's clear here again, we'll lead ya back.

MCSWEEN
I'm not a fugitive, Billy. and I don't wanna live like one. I've got some merchandise coming in tonight.

Billy looks over his shoulder to Doc, nonplused.

BILLY
You stay, Alex, and they're gonna kill ya. Then I'm gonna have to go around killin' everybody that killed you. That's a lot of killin'.

MCSWEEN
--You heard me, Billy.

SUSAN
(stepping forward)
Alex, maybe--

ALEX
You heard me!

SUSAN
We can't just stay here and hope the good Lord saves us from an all out--

ALEX
--I'm sick, Susan. I can't go to goddamned Old Mexico!

Over near the window, Doc clears his throat to politely interrupt.

DOC
Don't fret, Alex. Trip's been postponed.

Doc looks back out at the street below. The house goes silent. Billy walks slowly, reluctantly, to the window and shares Doc's view.

POV - FROM SECOND FLOOR WINDOW:

on the street below, Sheriff Peppin and his TEN-MAN POSSE are hitching their horses in scurrying silence, throwing sandbags down, diving into position.

BILLY (O.S.)
Peppin. How's the east side, Chavez?

AT A SIDE WINDOW

Chavez carefully peers out, hand at his sash.

POV - FROM EAST SIDE WINDOW:

Murphy-Dolan's twenty-five Seven Rivers shitheads.

CHAVEZ (O.S.)
Murphy-Dolan men.

BILLY (O.S.)
Charley, how's it over by you? Can we break?

AT THE OPPOSITE SIDE WINDOW

Charley ambles over in a crouch, pulling up his Levis and peeking out. He looks out and retracts his head quickly, as if he's been cobra spit. He looks again. Says nothing.

POV FROM WEST SIDE WINDOW;

John Kinney and The Dona Ana Bunch getting into position.

BILLY
(impatiently)
Charley, how is it?

REVERSE ON CHARLEY

looking away from the window, kneeling on the floor.

CHARLEY
It's John Kinney.

BILLY

only stares, having trouble believing just what's happening. Mcsween comes up beside him to look down.

MCSWEEN
I think the word that got to you was just a trap to get us all together in one place.

Billy keeps staring at Charley for some reason.

MCSWEEN
(continuing)
Look at them. It's going to be a massacre.

He turns to Susan, his eyes glassy, his asthmatic WHEEZE thickening. Doc sits in a chair.

DOC
Christ in heaven.

CHARLEY
It's John Kinney.

BILLY
Maybe they just want <u>us</u>.

MCSWEEN
No. I don't think so. They can end the war in one fell swoop right here, and that's what they're about to do.

CHARLEY
It's John Kinney.

DOC
Okay, Charley, thank you!

Billy looks over at Susan.

BILLY
They'll let Susan go. They have to. They . . .

Billy's eyes betray an uncertainty and a fear as he imagines the alternative. Susan comes forward, takes her husband's hand, takes a look for herself.

CHARLEY
(quietly from a corner)
Hangin' for sure, now . . .

PEPPIN (O.S.)
Bonney! We got ya up there, Kid. Take a look at the firepower down here! You all come on out real slow!

The Regulators each drop to a knee. Alex motions Susan down, and she looks ill as she smooths her dress and kneels on the floor.

PEPPIN (O.S.)
(continuing)
You up there, Bonney?

Bonney throws himself flat against the wall beside the window, and brings his lips as close to the open window as he can without forming a target.

BILLY
Yeah, I--

That's all the proof they need down below to OPEN UP ON THE HOUSE, BLASTING the windows in. Peppin's men take out the glass near Billy, Doc, and Mcsween, while Murphy and Dolan's men take out the window near Chavez--lying flat on the floor--and John Kinney's bunch SHATTERS GLASS, sill, and block a foot from Charley's vitrified head.

There is a long tense silence, and then an incongruous response. Billy LAUGHS. A short cackle that throws everybody's head around.

EXT. ON THE STREET

Larry Murphy, drunk and ruddy-faced, and packing a rifle, shouts up in his gruff brogue.

MURPHY
(shouting)
Hell of a sense of humor, Bonney!
(to his men)
Kill that weasel.

And they FIRE AGAIN, chipping away at the adobe structure. This attack triggers the same from Peppin's posse and Kinney's gunmen, doing a number on the quaint home in a matter of seconds.

Behind the war party, TOWNSPEOPLE run for cover.

INT. MCSWEEN HOUSE

Billy sits with his back against the wall, rifle across his lap, one of his pistols in his right hand.

DOC
What the hell we gonna do?

BILLY
Gotta show them that they met their match.

Billy turns his head up toward the caved in window.

BILLY
Hey, Peppin!

PEPPIN (O.S.)
I'm hearin' ya, Bonney!

BILLY
I see you have Charley Crawford down there with you, third man from the left!

PEPPIN (O.S.)
Yeah, we got a whole lot of--

Billy suddenly springs, squaring himself in the window, and FIRES ONE SHOT. He wriggles back to his seat.

EXT. ON THE STREET

CHARLEY CRAWFORD, third man from the left, lying behind a sandbag, is hit in the head and driven into the dirt. Peppin watches in disbelief.

BILLY (O.S.)
Hey, Peppin!? Charley Crawford ain't with ya anymore!

PEPPIN
Bastard. Fire.

THEY OPEN UP AGAIN, just as Billy dives out of view.

INT. MCSWEEN HOUSE

Susan is on the floor, shaking, looking at Alex, who swigs from his bottle of medicine. Dirty Steve crawls over to her.

DIRTY STEVE
You okay, Ma'am?

She nods, looks at Steve's young face.

AT THE WEST SIDE WINDOW

Charley sits, clutching his boot pistol in one hand. And he is shaking.

AT THE EAST SIDE WINDOW

Chavez stays flat, and he is loading a rifle.

AT THE FRONT WINDOW

Billy and Doc sit facing Alex.

PEPPIN (O.S.)
We know you can shoot, Bonney! But we can, too; and we got more firepower than you! Give it up!

BILLY
Charley, you take two rifles to your side. Doc, you go help him and load heavy. Dirty Steve, take both shotguns, go help Chavez. Alex?

Alex looks over, nervously. Billy throws him one of his many pistols. The attorney catches it.

BILLY
(continuing)
This is the last chance you got to handle John's case.

Alex throws it back.

ALEX
Active participation in a gun battle negates my life insurance policy. I can't do that.

Billy stares at him, baffled.

BILLY
Active participation in a . . . that's catchy. Everybody ready for some active participation? When I say "participate," everybody fire.

Billy cocks his Winchester.

EXT. ON THE STREET

Peppin sends his men down the line, signals over to John Kinney.

PEPPIN
Ready?

But before he can give further instructions, The Regulators BLAST AWAY on them from three sides, and everyone hits the dirt, bullets kicking into sandbags, mules, and TWO MORE MEN.

Silence.

PEPPIN
(continuing)
How many men they got up there?

(MORE)

PEPPIN (CONT'D)
(no one answers)
BLOW THEM THE HELL OUTTA THERE!

And the guns go off again, quaking the Mcsween house on its foundation.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MCSWEEN HOUSE - NIGHT

Billy sits in his same defiant position by the window. PAN just enough to catch the moon through the window. GUNSHOTS continue outside.

CAMERA BEGINS A SLOW AND STRANGE SWEEP of Charley, Doc, Susan, Alex and Chavez; all haggard. Frightened.

And as we MOVE SLOWLY around to the window, night slowly gives way to dawn, the moon to sun. PAN just enough to catch one of Billy's closed eyes. And the room is silent. The street outside is silent.

And then DRUMS. MARCHING. Rising out of the distance. Billy's eye opens.

Billy rises quickly, cranes to see down below. And when he spots what is making this sound, he sits fast. Hard. Then looks again.

POV FROM SECOND FLOOR WINDOW - DAY

coming down Lincoln's winding road are TWO SQUADRONS OF UNITED STATES CALVARY--one squad all black soldiers--thirty men in all, led by COLONEL NATHAN DUDLEY at double-quick. Some men are marching, some riding, and ten of them rolling in a pair of lethal-looking GATLING GUNS: cannons.

TOWNFOLK are CHEERING in the background.

CLOSER ON NEGRO SQUADRON

as they march aggressively, rifles at shoulders.

REVERSE ON DIRTY STEVE

as he beholds this sight, his jaw dropping. The nightmare of his life--Black soldiers. "Nigra" soldiers. Dozens of them.

Billy sits back down.

BILLY
They called in the troops.

Mcsween lowers his head, shakes it, rubs stubbornly at it.

DOC
We're good. But this is gettin' just a little bit outta hand . . .

SUSAN
No. They must be here to mediate; to break the whole thing up--thank God. The townspeople have called them.

(MORE)

SUSAN (CONT'D)
(to her husband)
Alex, maybe you should send a note down.

Billy blows his nose in a kerchief.

BILLY
Here ya go, Mr. President. Quite a county here in little ol' New Mexico. Bring a picnic lunch!.

EXT. ON THE STREET - DAY

Colonel Dudley, a powerfully-built officer with small eyes and a well-manicured beard, walks through the Peppin crowd, his men beside him.

BEHIND THE MURPHY-DOLAN MEN

a carriage creaks to a stop beside Jimmy Dolan, who is on his horse drinking coffee.

In the carriage is District Attorney Pierce, Judge Bristol and Yen Sun, delicately dressed for the event.

DOLAN
Mr. Pierce. Judge Bristol. Got all the rats in one hole.

Pierce nods.

PIERCE
What's been taking so long? We didn't want the army in here.
(quietly)
This is not the kind of attention we want.

Yen looks up at her guardian, then out at the adobe shooting target.

DOLAN
Everytime we try to get in close, we lose men. They've got about thirty boys up there. Maybe forty.

PIERCE
I see.

And Pierce cracks his mounts on, guiding the carriage straight toward the Peppin base where Colonel Dudley speaks with the sheriff. Dudley seems to be leaning hard on the local lawman until he sees Pierce and Bristol, pulling to a stop.

He walks over to meet with the Santa Fe Ring representatives.

COLONEL DUDLEY
Quite a bit of excitement. Hello, Judge, Mr. Pierce.

JUDGE BRISTOL
Good morning, Colonel.

Pierce stares at the Colonel inclemently.

PIERCE
Why are you here, Nathan?

COLONEL DUDLEY
I was dispatched here, Mr. Pierce. To make sure it doesn't get out of the hands of the civil authorities.

Yen is looking up at the adobe house.

JUDGE BRISTOL
Well, it has. Billy The Kid is up there, killing men willy-nilly. It is in the best interest of this county--of this country--that you help us rid ourselves of the killer.

PIERCE
What I believe the judge is saying, sir . . . is orders from Fort Stanton are overruled here in Lincoln by us. And if you have any hopes for a political future in the county seat--as I understand you do--you will respond to our . . . suggestions.

COLONEL DUDLEY
And what do you suggest, sir?

PIERCE
Line up your army, Colonel, and open fire on the bastards. Cannons and all.

Dudley lowers his eyes, and Pierce and the Judge confer with a glance. Yen suddenly leaps down off the carriage and breaks away,running through the soldiers, through the Peppin crowd.

PIERCE
(continuing)
CHINA!

Pierce stands off-balanced in the carriage. Dudley looks after the fleeing girl.

PIERCE
(continuing)
Stop her, soldiers! Stop her!

Pierce draws a derringer from his waistcoat.

INT. MCSWEEN HOUSE

Doc is looking out the window, then catches sight of the little Chinese girl running across the front property. TWO SOLDIERS chase her.

DOC
Yen.

He raises his Sharp's rifle and FIRES.

POV FROM SECOND FLOOR WINDOW:

a buffalo ball hits the ground at the soldiers' feet and they serpentine out of range, allowing Yen to keep running, reaching the lower floor of the house and entering through the porch.

EXT. ON THE STREET

District Attorney Pierce stands in his carriage, fuming.

PIERCE
There you go, Colonel. Your troops have been fired on. You're in the right now.

COLONEL DUDLEY
But your . . . the girl . . .

Pierce sits, moves his eyes from the house to the Colonel.

PIERCE
Burn it.

COLONEL DUDLEY
Excuse me?

PIERCE
I said . . . burn it.

Dudley just stares at him.

COLONEL DUDLEY
Mr. Pierce . . .

PIERCE
You don't have to, Colonel. Just tell your troops not to mind the men who go around back and do.

Dudley hesitates, then nods, and walks away.

INT. MCSWEEN HOUSE - STAIRCASE

Doc is running down the steps, Yen coming up. When they see each other, they stop for a second of eye contact. Doc hurries down to her, grabs her in a hug, buries his face in her neck and lifts her.

Doc holds her tightly, rocks her as SHOTS GO OFF just outside the door.

UPSTAIRS

Billy and Dirty Steve are BLASTING rifles side by side.

RETURN FIRE chews up the wall around Charley, a GLASS CABINET SMASHING down on him. His eyes are welling with tears.

CHARLEY
Hey, Billy. I gotta go. I got a . . . a wife . . . . she's a Mexican gal . . . down in . . .

Billy wheels, gripping rifle in one hand, pistol in the other, and there is a desperate look in his eye.

BILLY
(continuing)
If you don't stand up and whup some ass, you're never gonna make it back to the village. C'mon, Charley!

Charley remains kneeling on the floor, broken glass all over him, his face white.

DIRTY STEVE

is crawling across the floor with his weapon when he stops suddenly, nostrils flaring. He smells something.

DIRTY STEVE
They lit it. They lit the house.

Billy looks at Steve, and for the first time worry registers in his face.

COLONEL DUDLEY (O.S.)
Mr. Bonney! Mr. Mcsween! This is Colonel Nathan Dudley outta Fort Stanton! come on out with your hands high!

BILLY
I better reason with him.

Billy gets close to the window.

BILLY
Hey, colonel Shithead! You can kiss my ass.

The boys exchange defeated glances. Mcsween looks stunned.

BILLY
I know what you want! Get President Hayes down here and we'll come out! How do you like that? Ahh.

Doc and Yen come back into the room, and Doc leads the girl over to Alex and Susan where she quickly kneels in a formal position Susan looks at her, perplexed.

Billy runs across the floor, sniffing at the SMOKE, panicking.

AT THE WEST SIDE WINDOW

Charley quakes under another fusilade that eats up the walls around him. He loads a rifle, turns toward the window. He closes his eyes and tears spill down his face.

CHARLEY
Hey, Kinney, you bastard! I'm gonna shoot your ass! I'm gonna shoot your ass from here to Carlsbad and back, if I have ta, you peeder-breath shit dog! Maniac!

BILLY
Yeah, Charley! Yeah!

GUNFIRE rocks the house. Charley raises the gun and FIRES SIX.

CHARLEY
YEAH!

--YELLING with every powder blast.

OUT OF A CORRIDOR

Chavez comes, leading five skittish horses out of the basement from where the FLAMES are bursting. Bursting everywhere.

EXT. ON THE STREET

Colonel Dudley steps out in front of his soldiers and the so-called civil authorities. John Kinney is standing beside Dudley and he has a quart bottle of bourbon in his hand.

COLONEL DUDLEY
The lady's coming out! There will be no firing!

A moment later, Susan Mcsween, doing her best to stay together, walks out from her burning, bullet-knawed home. The Murphy-Dolan men and Kinney Bunch begin CATCALLING rudely.

SUSAN
Colonel--

MURPHY
(mocking her)
--oy, Colonel, can I do somethin' for ya, Sir? Back in the tent, perhaps.

LAUGHTER rises from the lines. One of the men grabs her ass. She doesn't even flinch. CATCALLS bombard her. Dudley stares straight ahead at the burning house.

SUSAN
Colonel. I don't understand what you, as a leader in the U.S. Army are doing to my house . . . but if I did, I doubt it would matter. all I would like are my things saved from the fire. Please grant my husband permission to throw our valuables and clothing down.

Dudley stares silently at the burning house.

INT. MCSWEEN HOUSE

Billy crawls to a window and peers out--but he has to leap away when a FLAMING BEAM falls with an EXPLOSION of BLACK SMOKE and SPARKS. Again he weasels to the window and looks out.

BILLY'S POV;

an AMERICAN FLAG has been raised just behind the gatling guns, a standard procedure for calvary occupation. It undulates in the wind. Murphy, Pierce, Bristol and Dudley stand just below it.

REVERSE ON BILLY

peeking out at the flag. He contorts his face sarcastically.

BILLY
(singing loudly)
Oh, say can you seeeeeee . . .

And he keeps SINGING, botching the words, but wailing just the same.

Behind him, the others are lugging trunks and boxes to the window. Doc stops for a moment and watches Billy. He drops to a knee beside Yen Sun, exhausted. And then he falls in singing, too, MUMBLING in monotone, the words to the anthem. And Charley starts too. All the Regulators--SINGING OFF-KEY.

EXT. MCSWEEN HOUSE

All eyes look up at the inferno from where the song moans.

INT. MCSWEEN HOUSE

As the boys hurry to get the Mcsween belongings to the window, they keep singing; FLAMES surround them.

They sing the last line of the anthem, and Billy sticks his tongue out and razzes a long and defiant punctuation.

EXT. MCSWEEN HOUSE

While the house, engulfed in flames, burns quickly, the thirty calvary men and Murphy survivors remain in war stance.

Billy's men have laid three long wooden planks out an upstairs window like a ramp, leading to the front yard. One by one, hat boxes, jewelry boxes, and kitchen silver slide down the ramp, coming to rest on the bottom.

MURPHY
This is a mighty big allowance, Colonel, woman or no woman.

DUDLEY
That fire's moving fast. They'll be coming out with hot britches within five minutes.

KINNEY
And when they do, we're opening up.

Colonel Dudley doesn't respond.

James Dolan, sitting on the mount behind the war zone, grins impishly.

A BUZZ WORD is traveling fast down the rows of troopers.

BUZZ WORD
When they come out--open up.
When they come out--open up.
When they come out--

UP AT THE MCSWEEN WINDOW

a large clothes trunk is edged over the sill and released, sliding down the ramp, striking the other boxes like backed up luggage on a conveyor.

We HOLD ON this certain TRUNK, for it is a box that contains something important. SHADOWS darken the trunk as men pass to and fro.

AT THE FIRING LINE

the troopers continue with the buzz word, priming their guns, preparing for the inevitable surrender.

Murphy strolls by, rifle on his shoulder, excitement in his eyes. Colonel Dudley lights a smoke. John Kinney passes his bottle.

AT THE RAMP BOTTOM

the trunk sits angled between other rescued belongings. And then, suddenly, the lid flies open and Billy pops out at us, BLASTING dual pistols. his bucktoothed grimace big and wild. Like a loaded Jack-in-the-box he blazes away, SCREAMING OUT.

AT THE WAR LINE

every soul is caught off guard for the second drop that Billy needs.

TWO PEPPIN POSSE MEN are hammered by the lead; District Attorney Pierce is leveled; John Kinney's bourbon quart is smashed in his hand, and then so is his head; a SOLDIER is dropped; while all others OPEN FIRE ON--

BILLY

who quickly hurls himself up and over the trunk, clutching his rifle and falling behind rows of boxes and trunks. PLATES and CHINA and SILVER are riddled, but only one ball nails Billy.

FIVE HORSES

CRASH out through the flames from the ruins of the house, Doc at the helm, firing the Big Fifty. Yen is on the back of his horse, clinging to him, eyes closed.

Dirty Steve rides to the side of him, throwing fire from his shotgun, but a DOZEN POWDER BLASTS knock him off the horse, slamming him to the ground and killing him.

Charley storms out on a third horse, firing a rifle. But when he sees Steve go down, he sweeps back, leans down . . . and FOUR SHOTS knock him to the ground. He keeps going for Steve, standing up and taking another fusilade. He goes down again. Crawls for Steve.

Chavez is on the fourth horse, riding Zuni style, blade in hand.

Mcsween is on the fifth horse, but he freezes in the raining gunfire, tries to turn his horse around, go back to the burning house. He is shot ELEVEN TIMES and thrown into the air.

Billy leaps for Charley's horse, which is circling cold-jawed. Powder balls rip through his buttocks, but Charley stands again, taking a fusilade meant for Billy and he runs two steps before falling dead next to Dirty Steve.

AT THE ADOBE WALL

separating the Mcsween house from a river and the Sierra Bonita foothills, Doc jumps his horse just as several lead balls hit him, knock him off the horse. Yen is hit twice--once through the cheek, but stays on, clears the wall.

Chavez's horse is killed before he makes the wall, and he makes a diving effort to grab Billy's stirrup. He does, and when Billy clears the wall, Chavez goes with him.

Charley, Doc, and Steve and Mcsween have not made the wall. Dirty Steve is dead. Mcsween is dead. Charley is dead.

Doc runs, falls, but grabs the edge of the wall with his free hand. Someone grabs the hand, yanks him up the wall. It is Billy, his torso ruptured. He pulls the badly balled Doc up . . . and over as the wall is chewed apart by GATLING GUNFIRE.

EXT. MCSWEEN'S HOUSE

The Mcsween house is engulfed in flames. Colonel Dudley runs about frantically, ordering his Gatling GUNNERS to cease fire and pursue the fugitives.

Lawrence Murphy stands white-faced and incredulous for a moment. Voices are rising up from the street, about SIXTY LINCOLN RESIDENTS, CHEERING the miraculous escape.

MURPHY
He's getting away. He's getting . . .

And then he panics, not being able to take another night knowing that William H. Bonney is slinking about with new bodies to avenge.

MURPHY
Dudley! Get that sonuvabitch!

Murphy runs to the front of the action, sweat glistening on his red face in the reflection of the fire. He stands at the ruins of the adobe wall, looking after the fleeing figures in the distance. Soldiers ride past him, FIRING RIFLES.

MURPHY
(continuing)
Bonney! You bastard! You're a dead boy! You hear me?!

Murphy's bellowing is barely heard over the CHEERING on the street.

IN THE SIERRA BONITA RIVER

Yen is thrown from her horse as it clears the wall and thunders for freedom. She falls in the river and perishes there.

Chavez runs, grabs an errant mare, and as he clops full speed across the narrow river, he drops low and grabs Yen, pulling her out of the river and into the saddle on the run.

Billy rides with Doc behind him, pulling up alongside Doc's stray horse—the one that threw Yen—and Doc "jumps pony" at full gallop, hanging on and following Chavez and his girl.

On the third surviving horse, Billy lays low, looking half dead. RIFLE SHOTS crack the air behind him, but it looks as though he can make it; ride the dorrel fifty more yards or so and get lost in the brush. BILLY HEARS MURPHY'S THREATS in the distance—a vague roar.

He looks ill . . . fading in and out . . . and then he jerks back on the reins, stopping his horse. Stops it dead, as if he can't go on.

DOC

turns, stares baffled, horrified at The Kid.

CHAVEZ

looks back, too, can't believe it.

BILLY

turns painfully in his saddle . . . raises an arm that is half-burnt from the fire, half-perforated from the endless powder blasts. He thumbs back the hammer on his Colt, the effort producing a wash of blood over blue steel.

CLOSE ON BILLY'S EYES

focusing. Glaring. As if nothing has mattered more in his life; as if his monomaniacal obsession is about to culminate in this moment. But Murphy is a hundred and some odd yards away. Soldiers are only fifty off, close enough to take The Kid.

Billy squints. And FIRES.

EXT. MCSWEEN HOUSE

Murphy stands bereft of reason in the crumbled adobe of the wall, looking down at the foothills, at the hunters and their wounded prey. He is screaming orders, gesturing wildly.

MURPHY
(his Irish thickening)
Get that little bastard, or I'll see that—

Murphy cuts his sentence off and looks distracted for a moment. He takes a step back, then turns, staggering . . . a neat black hole punched into the center of his forehead. The soldiers and posse running to and fro don't even seem to notice as the big man FALLS OUT OF FRAME.

EXT. FOOTHILLS

Billy watches Murphy collapse and for a split second, he looks surprised. He kicks his horse and bolts, pushing the sorrel so hard he outruns Doc and then Chavez and Yen, taking the lead.

As he clumps past, he spits out a breathless sentence.

BILLY

Got Murphy.

Doc and Chavez raise their heads as they ride, staring at Billy as they absorb the announcement. Then all drop their heads and rush into the thick trees of the Sierra Bonita, still only a hair out of calvary shooting range.

EXT. MCSWEEN HOUSE - DUSK

Flames consume the home while Dolan and several others kneel or stand around the dead body of L.G. Murphy, shocked.

The CHEERING on the streets rises to a fever pitch and merges with a CHANTING we've heard before. FARMERS are coming out of the woodwork, a hopefulness in their eyes.

MEXICAN VILLAGERS

El-Chi-va-to! El Chi-va-to!

THE FIRE

burns out of control as the SUPERIMPOSED IMAGE of Billy and the survivors thunder up the mountainside in the last glimmer of daylight.

The CHANT IS FADING . . . but still heard into--

EXT. SIERRA BONITA RANGE - SECLUDED HOUSE - TWO DAYS LATER

A farmhouse has been built onto a one-room cabin, and it's all been painted white, and it all looks quite clean, set back in the brasada of the mountains. A WIND moves through the brush and the flowers that surround the home.

Susan Mcsween walks with DR. TAYLOR EALY, an old bull-chested man, and TWO WOMEN dressed like school teachers or minister's wives. Just in front of them walk three limping, heavily bandaged, figures and a small Chinese girl, her face stitched and taped.

They are making their sluggish way toward three horses hitched in the cottonwoods.

Billy, both canvas pant legs slit, revealing two more silk scarves--a red one and a blue one--threaded through neatly. His left arm is bandaged from thumb to elbow, but he still helps Chavez, who is even more heavily bandaged, up onto his mount.

Doc, covering most of his dressed wounds with his perforated long duster, takes in the world through one surviving lens of his specs. Doc Ealy and Susan help him up onto his horse. He then reaches down for Yen who has no problem swinging up into the saddle. She wraps her thin arms around doc and holds on tight.

Billy hugs the Widow Mcsween for a long moment. He then accepts Doc Ealy's help up into his saddle.

Once there, he looks out into the brush and draws his Colt, border rolls it and holsters it again.

EXT. WHITE SANDS - SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO - DAY

Billy, Doc and Chavez, ride toward us out of a flaming red sun.

CLOSER - THE REGULATORS

slow to a complete halt somewhere in the middle of vast whiteness. The WIND BANSHEES through a gorge, filling the silence that passes between the young men.

Billy looks at Chavez, and they lock eyes for a long time. Chavez ends the stare-down by shaking his head slightly, to say no. Billy looks at Doc, then at his girl. Then hard into Doc's eyes. Doc extends a hand to Billy, and it takes The Kid a while to accept it and shake goodbye.

DOC (V.O.)
(reading from newspaper)
Advices from Lincoln report that Jose Chavez Y Chavez moved to California where he changed his name and took work on a fruit ranch.

Chavez leans off his horse and hugs Billy. He hugs Doc, then turns his horse and rides West.

DOC (V.O.)
(continuing)
Josiah "Doc" Scurlock is reported to have left the West for the East, taking with him a celestial bride, her mother and fourteen brothers and sisters.

Doc reins his mount in a circle, and with Yen Sun's arms wrapped around him, he starts at a walk, in an easterly direction.

DOC (V.O.)
(continuing)
Susan Mcsween went on to see both her husband's and John Tunstall's dreams to fruition by becoming one of the most prominent cattle women of all time.
(a beat)
Governor Axtell was forced to resign by President Rutherford B. Hayes, and both the Murphy-Dolan faction and the Santa Fe Ring collapsed.

Billy starts his horse west, then east, then circles, looking out across the sands, not sure where to go. He cracks his horse on, and rides at full-speed, north.

DOC (V.O.)
(continuing)
William H. Bonney . . . also known as Billy The Kid, continued to ride, never leaving New Mexico. He was caught in Fort Sumner by Sheriff Pat Garret and killed there. Sources report that he was unarmed and shot in the dark. He was buried with Charley Bowdre at Old Fort Sumner. Advices from Sumner report that sometime later, an unidentified person snuck into the

(MORE)

DOC (CONT'D)
graveyard and chiseled an inscription on the tombstone. The epitaph being but one word: pals.

And that word remains today.

LONG SHOT - THE WHITE DESERT

and the boys going separate ways; Chavez and Doc trotting easily, Billy racing with the Devil.

LOS LOBOS SCORE BEGINS

And just as the young guns' trails give way to the expanse of sand and primrose flower, a SLOW MOTION GHOST IMAGE appears over a broiling red July sun.

THE REGULATORS

Dick, Charley, Dirty Steve, Chavez, Doc and Billy, riding hell-bent for leather, rough-housing, riding, laughing.

END CREDITS over image.

Lincoln, New Mexico
May, 1987